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The Irish National Land League

1879-1881

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**THE IRISH NATIONAL LAND LEAGUE
1879 - 1881**

BY

WALTER WILSON JENNINGS

THESIS

FOR THE

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THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY

Walter Wilson Jennings

ENTITLED *The Irish National Land League*

IS APPROVED BY ME AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF *Bachelor of Arts in History*

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THE IRISH NATIONAL LAND LEAGUE

1879 - 1881

CHAPTER I.

HISTORICAL SKETCH - THE REMOTE BACKGROUND.

In order to explain the causes calling forth the Irish National Land League, it seems advisable to review briefly some of the relations between England and Ireland.

These relations center chiefly in the land system. Although land was confiscated in Ireland at the time of the Norman Invasion, May, 1169,¹ the real land problem begins with Elizabeth's device of military occupation.² Her system of colonization or conquest³ had resulted in a rather thick population of Scotch colonists in Ulster by the close of James I's reign. Moreover, such towns as Derry, Lurgan, and Belfast had been founded and granted special privileges. Of course, the Irish were watching for an opportunity to throw off the foreign yoke, and in 1641, the conflict between Charles I and Parliament seemed to answer their desires. However, before the rebellion had gone beyond the bounds of Ulster, the English Parliament

1. Bonn, M. J. Modern Ireland and Her Agrarian Problem, 59.

2. Healy, T. M. Why There Is an Irish Land Question and an Irish Land League, 3-5.

3. Elizabeth continued her large land allotments to favorites, but the grants of James I were much more moderate.

passed an act confiscating two and a half million acres of land which were offered for sale; moreover, in spite of the fact that there were no rebels outside of Ulster, the land was to be taken in equal proportions from the four provinces.⁴ In the strife that followed, the innocent suffered equally with the guilty. At Wicklow, Sir Charles Coote allowed his soldiers to spear infants who had scarcely left the breast on the ground that if allowed to survive they would grow up to be men and women, and that his object was to extirpate the entire brood.⁵ Carlyle was certainly justified in describing these cruelties as "not a picture, but a huge blot; an indiscriminate blackness, one which the human memory cannot willingly charge itself with."⁶

A more terrible and efficient instrument of Irish punishment than Coote was found in the person of Oliver Cromwell. The harshness and cruelty displayed at Drogheda and Wexford will forever blacken the memory of the great Protector, but he may be judged by his own words spoken after the capture of the former: "We refused them quarter. I believe we put to the sword the whole number of defendants. I do not think that thirty escaped. Those that did are in safe custody for the Barbadoes. . . . I wish all honest hearts may give the glory of this to God alone."⁷ Such treatment, during the eight years of Civil War, played a large part in reducing the population of Ireland from a million and a half to considerably less than a million.⁸

4. Healy, T. M. Why There Is an Irish Land Question and an Irish Land League, 7 and 8.

5. Lawless, E. Story of the Nations, Ireland, 244.

6. Ibid., 245.

7. Ibid., 261 and 262.

8. Ibid., 266.

The English, nevertheless, were not content with this punishment, and Cromwell planned an enormous scheme of eviction whereby all the Catholic landholders of Ireland were ordered to quit their homes on a certain date and depart to Connaught where they were to inhabit a narrow desolate tract between the Shannon and the Sea, for the most part without houses or accommodation for their reception. Moreover, the Irish were forbidden to enter a walled town, and a cordon of soldiers was to prevent their return. Anyone found east of the line after May 1, 1654, was to suffer death.⁹ Possibly, however, a more disgraceful blot on Cromwell's name than murder or exile was the fate meted out to the wives and families of the Irish officers and soldiers who had been allowed to enter foreign service. Of necessity, the women and children had been left behind, and the Government now seized and shipped thousands of these unfortunates to the West Indies as slaves. In fact, the traffic seems to have received no regulation until the wives of Cromwellian soldiers were accidentally seized.¹⁰

When Charles II regained his father's throne in 1660, pressure was brought to bear with the intention of mitigating past cruelties by providing for the restoration of the confiscated lands, but the attempt did not meet with complete success. Lawless sums up the results thus: "As a net result of the whole settlement we find that, whereas before '41 the Irish Roman Catholics had held two-thirds of the good land and all the waste,

9. Lawless, E. Story of the Nations, Ireland, 267 and 268.

10. Ibid., 270.

"after the Restoration they held only one-third in all, and this, too, after more than two million acres previously forfeited had been restored to them."¹¹ This settlement did not last long, for after James II had been driven out of England by William in 1688, the Irish attempted to restore the exile. Their efforts failed, and the victor confiscated more land.¹² Furthermore, by the treaty of Limerick, William gave the Irish officers and soldiers the choice of serving him or going to France. All except a thousand preferred exile to service under the hated Protestant. When news of this decision passed around, the women and children rushed to the shore, and since passage could not be provided for them, many, in the agony of separation, clung to the departing boats and were drowned.¹³ Another cause of hatred was thus added to a long list, but a lack of space forbids adequate enumeration.

Naturally, this oppression rendered Irish conditions unfavorable, and made the people poor. On February 16, 1830, the Irish Solicitor General, Mr. Doherty, stated in the House of Commons that the peasantry of Ireland were "worse off than the beasts which browsed upon the land."¹⁴ The great cause of poverty and the resulting discontent was the system of absentee landholding. J. S. Mill, possibly viewing with prophetic eyes the troubles of 1879-1881, declared in 1869: "No accommodation is henceforth possible which does not give the Irish peasant all

11. Lawless, E. Story of the Nations, Ireland, 276.

12. Bonn, M. J. Modern Ireland and Her Agrarian Problem, 59.

13. Lawless, E. Story of the Nations, Ireland, 298.

14. Healy, T. M. Why There Is an Irish Land Problem and an Irish Land League, 67-70.

"that he could gain by a revolution--permanent possession of the land subject to fixed burdens."¹⁵ Of course, other causes came in, and there is quite a large element of truth in the following enumeration taken from a letter written by a landlord and addressed to the Editor of the London Times:

1. Overcrowded pauper population.
2. Insufficiency of land to support the people living on it.
3. Infinitesimal subdivision of holdings.
4. Early marriages and large families.
5. Nature of the potato crop, prolific but subject to periodic variations.
6. Utter ignorance of the first principles of farming.
7. The effect of the climate upon the character of the people, causing them to form indolent habits and encouraging their propensity to drink and to attend unnecessarily markets, fairs, wakes, funerals, etc.
8. The undue competition for land, that being the only means of subsistence, and the exorbitant rents often resulting.
9. The gross extortion of money lenders and shopkeepers.¹⁶

The fifth point mentioned by the landlord was apparent from the experiences of 1847 and 1848. The dearth of that period taught the peasants unforgettable lessons. In 1844 the population was 8,175,124; in 1851 it was 6,552,385. In 1841 the number of inhabited houses was 1,328,839; ten years later, 1,046,223. In 1841 the number of peasant cabins was 491,278; in 1851 the number had decreased to 135,589. Death came to the people with undreamed of rapidity, for sickness aided starvation so

15. England and Ireland, 22.

16. The London Times, December 25, 1880.

effectually that the coffin supply proved totally inadequate. The landlords helped the work along. In 1847 there were seventy thousand evictions affecting three hundred thousand people; from 1849 to 1852, 221,845 evictions probably rendered nine hundred thousand people homeless. The weakened condition of the emigrants was shown by the fact that sixteen times as many died on the voyage or in hospitals as formerly. Moreover, the hopeless state of the tenants was further revealed by the exodus of 1,436,862 people during the ten year period ending in 1851. From a knowledge of these facts, the Irish peasants concluded that a potato crop failure was likely to lead to famine, that a famine would probably cause a destructive pestilence, and that many of the landlords, perhaps the majority of them, would take advantage of famine and pestilence to push their rights to the limit, thus depriving thousands of sick and starving people of a home.¹⁷

Warned by the continuous agitation resulting from pitiful conditions, and possibly moved by the accusations of such writers as J. S. Mill,¹⁸ the English government passed the Land Act of 1870. This measure extended or rather recognized the Ulster custom¹⁹ and others which in all essential particulars

17. Contemporary Review 38: 981-985 (Article by T. P. O'Connor).

18. Mill had written: "Short of actual depopulation and desolation or the direct personal enslaving of the inhabitants, little was omitted which could give a people just cause to execrate its conquerors." (England and Ireland, 4).

19. The peasants of Ulster were not disturbed in their occupations provided they paid their rents punctually. Moreover, the revision of rent was such that the tenants did not have to pay a purely competitive or rack rent. The occupant could sell his interest in the holding, but, within reasonable

corresponded to it. The Act applied mainly to all yearly tenancies up to the value of £100, but lease holds under thirty-one years were also included. The yearly tenant who was the subject of arbitrary eviction was to receive compensation for disturbance provided he had paid his rents and had not sublet his holding without the permission of the landlord. Moreover, on leaving, the tenant was entitled to pay for any improvements which he had carried out. In addition, tenants on estates coming into bankruptcy courts, received, by the "Bright clauses", facilities for the purchase of their holdings.²⁰

To be sure, this Act was an improvement over past conditions, but there were still reasons for discontent. These causes were clearly pointed out by S. C. Buxton as follows:

1. Since the Act gave no regular jurisdiction over rents, landlords raised them and the tenants submitted rather than be evicted.
2. Increased rents caused the tenants to fall into arrears, and thus deprived them of the benefits of the Disturbance clause.
3. Capricious evictions were only partially stopped.
4. The larger tenants were dissatisfied with the amount of protection afforded them for their improvements.
5. The larger farmers had to contract themselves out of the Act, and submit to very onerous and discouraging conditions.
6. Leases were often forced on tenants above the £ 50 limit in order to save compensation for disturbance.

limits, the landlord had the right of veto, and also the right of preëmption. If the owner desired to exercise his right, he paid the tenant a moderate price for improvements.

20. Bonn, M. J. Modern Ireland and Her Agrarian Problem, 74.

7. The tenant could not bear to leave the land or leave the result of his industry and outlay behind him. Moreover, he did not have implicit faith that the value of his interest in the holding would be secured on leaving.
8. The consequent litigation, distrust, and insecurity shook the tenant's confidence in the Act.
9. Finally, the undefined nature of the Ulster Tenant Right and the encouragement given to conflicting usages and customs, also increased litigation, discontent, and enmity.²¹

That these objections were not theoretical alone is shown by the fact that only 1,808 grants of compensation were made out of 6,136 applications for the period 1871-1880. Since these grants were only £147,304²² or £77 per capita, the evicted tenant could not support himself on his compensation money, for, besides the farm, he knew only one source of income--money on interest at the bank.²³

21. Irish Land Bill of 1870 and Lords and Tories' Amendments Thereon, 17 and 18.

22. Of this amount £82,543 went to Ulster.

23. Bonn, M. J. Modern Ireland and Her Agrarian Problem, 75.

CHAPTER II.

CERTAIN CONDITIONS IN IRELAND, 1879-1881.

In order to appreciate the work of the Land League, it will be necessary to consider somewhat in detail certain conditions prevailing in Ireland from 1879 to 1881.

Probably the first important point to note is geographical. Ireland, although divided artificially, really falls into three distinct parts: first, the Ireland of the East and of the river basins with rich soils, large farms, and succulent pastures; second, the Ireland of the North, Center, and South with holdings varying from fifteen to fifty acres; and, third, the Ireland of the West with four acre holdings, cottier tenements, and potato cultivation.¹ Artificially, the "Emerald Isle" is divided into the provinces of Leinster, Munster, Ulster, and Connaught, and these in turn are subdivided into counties. In area, Ireland contains 32,531 square miles or 20,819,982 acres distributed as follows: Leinster, 4,876,918; Munster, 6,067,723; Ulster, 5,483,201; and Connaught, 4,392,086.² For purposes of government, the island is divided into 159 unions, and these for election purposes are broken up into 3,751 electoral districts.³

In the second place, the population, occupations, and products of Ireland merit attention. In 1881 the population was

1. Lord Dufferin on the 3 F's, 22.

2. Statesman's Year Book, 1886, 268.

3. Bonn, M. J. Modern Ireland and Her Agrarian Problem, 50.

5,174,836 or 237,541 below the report of 1871. Of this number, Leinster had 1,278,989; Munster, 1,331,115; Ulster, 1,743,075; and Connaught, 821,657.⁴ Of the total population, 997,956 were listed as engaged in agriculture, 72,245 in commerce, 426,161 as domestics, 691,509 in industries, 198,684 in the professions, and 2,788,281 as indefinite and non-productive.⁵ Since this paper deals with the land question to a certain extent, the acreage under tillage is worthy of consideration. The figures for 1879, 1880, and 1881 are 3,184,578, 3,171,259, and 3,192,959. By adding the amount in meadow and clover, the totals are raised to 5,121,833, 5,081,084, and 5,191,361.⁶ The following table shows the live products of Ireland in the same years:

	<u>1879</u>	<u>1880</u>	<u>1881</u>
Horses and mules	596,890	582,130	573,980
Asses	188,839	186,327	187,356
Cattle	4,067,778	3,921,517	3,954,479
Sheep	4,017,903	3,562,463	3,258,583
Pigs	1,072,185	850,269	1,088,041
Goats	278,843	265,789	266,553
Poultry	13,782,835	13,430,182	13,965,760 ⁷

4. Statesman's Year Book for 1886, 268.

5. Ibid., 269. England and Wales with an area of 37,239,351 acres had in their fifty-two counties 25,974,439 people distributed through the occupations as follows: agriculture, 1,383,184; commerce, 980,128; domestic, 1,803,810; industries, 6,373,367; professions, 647,075; indefinite and non-productive, 14,786,875. (Statesman's Year Book, 1886, 269).

6. The London Times, September 24, 1881. The six products with the greatest acreage were oats, potatoes, turnips, barley, wheat and flax. Two-thirds of the cultivated land was devoted to the raising of the first two crops, and the second was especially important in western Ireland. Garden vegetables were prominent among the other products listed.

7. The London Times, September 25, 1881.

From the statistics given in the preceding paragraph, certain variations will be noticed, but only those relating to the live products are obvious. The changes were largely due to the famine that swept over Ireland during the period under discussion. This famine, according to one writer,⁸ was caused by:

1. Diseases among the pigs, sheep, and cattle.
2. Foxes among the turkeys and geese.
3. Potato blight attacking the potato crop.
4. Heavy rains which washed away the produce.⁹

Of course, the third cause was the most important. In 1876, 4,154,784 tons of potatoes valued at £ 12,464,382 were produced; in 1877, 1,757,275 tons valued at £5,271,822; in 1878, 2,526,504 tons estimated at £7,579,512; and in 1879, 1,113,676 tons valued at £3,341,028.¹⁰ Naturally, with the failure of crops, the merchants stopped credit and conditions became lamentable.¹¹

Since western Ireland was the principal potato producing section, the famine was especially severe there. During the early stages of the dearth, the Duchess of Marlborough wrote to the Editor of the London Times, stating that in parts of Kerry, Galway, Sligo, Mayo, Roscommon, and the south of the county of Cork, in fact, in most of the western districts of Ireland, there would be extreme misery and suffering among the poor due to loss of turf, loss of cattle, and failure of crops, unless a vigorous attempt at private charity supplemented the ordinary system of Poor Law Relief.¹²

8. Mr. Murphy, Ex-District Inspector of the Royal Irish Constabulary

9. Catholic World, 43: 26 (Article by Mr. Murphy).

10. Contemporary Review, 38: 986 (Article by T. P. O'Connor).

11. The London Times, December 22, 1879.

12. The London Times, December 18, 1879.

Conditions grew worse, and the famishing peasants neglected clothing in their effort to obtain food. Late in March, 1880, a lady on the Duchess of Marlborough's Relief Committee wrote that Major Gaskell hardly ever saw in Donegal such a thing as bed clothes. In fact, the reports indicate that in most of western Ireland straw served the poor as beds, and coarse bags as clothing and bed clothes.¹³

When the reports of Irish destitution first went out, many people denied the facts. The London Times, sceptical at first, faced conditions squarely, and admitted that the Irish population was "hugging the soil, fighting for patches, living like pigs and every now and then clamoring for somebody to tide them over their difficulties."¹⁴ James Redpath, an American who made a personal inspection, declared that the Irish cabins and people were more wretched than the Negro cabins and their occupants during the darkest days of slavery.¹⁵ Colonel "Chinese" Gordon described the condition of the destitute Irish as "worse than that of any people in the world, let alone Europe."¹⁶ He said: "I believe that these people are made as we are, that they are patient beyond belief, loyal, but at the same time broken spirited and desperate, living on the verge of starvation in places in which we would not keep our cattle. The Bulgarians,

13. The London Times, December 18, 1879.

14. Ibid., February 14, 1880.

15. R. M. McWade, The Uncrowned King, 169. McWade was Ex-President of the Municipal Council of Philadelphia, and Secretary of the Philadelphia Relief Committee.

16. Healy, T. M. Why There Is an Irish Land Question and an Irish Land League, 81.

"Anatolians, Chinese, and Indians are better off than many of them are."¹⁷ In round numbers, McWade allots 47,000 cases of distress to Leitrim, 46,000 to Roscommon, 48,000 to Sligo, 124,000 to Galway and 143,000 to Mayo. These, he declares, are 3,750 under the exact number.¹⁸ Munster was almost equally unfortunate, for the Mansion-house Committee reports show that 232,759 persons were "in terrible distress." Quoting round numbers again, Waterford had 8,100 cases, Tipperary 17,000, Limerick 17,000, Clare 43,000, Cork 70,000, and Kerry 75,000.¹⁹

Naturally, in a time of such misery, attention turned to the owners of the soil. These proprietors were largely absentees, and many of the farms were of great size. Spencer Jackson named 761 landholders who held 10,364,900 acres of land or over half of Ireland.²⁰ Their power was practically absolute despite the Act of 1870, and Mabel Sharman Crawford's words were still full of meaning. She described her power thus: "I could seize at pleasure on the value created by the tenants industry. The homes they had built were not theirs, but mine; and from the farms that some had carved with patient toil out of furze and heather-covered, thin, poor, hillside soil, I could evict them penniless or grind them down to pauperism through the exaction of an exorbitant rent."²¹ Unlike Mrs. Crawford, many landlords did

17. Healy, T. M. Why There Is an Irish Land Question and an Irish Land League, 81.

18. McWade, R. M. The Uncrowned King, 167.

19. Ibid., 169.

20. Land Monopolists of Ireland and a Plan for Their Gradual Extinction, 2-13.

21. Contemporary Review, 52: 265. She had bought land in Ireland in 1869, and was testing the efficacy of kindness.

grind their tenants down to pauperism, and treat them in the most arbitrary manner. Thus, Lord Leitrim, according to reports, passed the holding of one of his tenants and noticed a good new cabin. Angered because he had not been consulted, he ordered his bailiff to pull the chimney down and partly unroof the house. Since the servant followed his master's command, the tenant was compelled to live in the old home again.²²

Of more importance, however, in showing cruelty than capricious action was deliberate eviction. Gladstone, in his second speech on the Disturbance Bill, declared that a sentence of eviction came very near to a sentence of starvation.²³ If the great statesman's words were true, the landlords passed sentences of starvation upon 463 families in 1877, 980 in 1878, 1,278 in 1879, and 2,110 in 1880.²⁴ January of 1881 showed 43 evictions, February 92, and March 215.²⁵ During the period under discussion, over fifty thousand people were driven from their homes. In order to realize the cruelty displayed, some of the instances must be given. Old people, sick beyond recovery, were thrown out, and women with infants a few hours old were driven from the shelter of their homes. A wife begged in vain that the bailiff would wait half an hour while her husband drew his last breath, and a husband had to carry his wife from her bed to the "shelter of the rain-swept moor that their child might be born out of sight of the

22. The London Times, August 16, 1880.

23. Contemporary Review, 38:987 (Article by T. P. O'Connor).

24. Bonn, M. J. Modern Ireland and Her Agrarian Problem, 76.

25. The London Times, April 6, 1881.

"soldiers deputed to guard the officials who had been sent to pull their homes about their ears."²⁶ Even as increased evictions resulted from famine, so agrarian outrages resulted from evictions.²⁷

Notwithstanding the cruelty of most landlords, it must be admitted that many sought to lighten the burdens of their tenants by reducing rents. Reports from Clare County show numerous reductions of from ten to twenty-five per cent,²⁸ and other counties show similar abatements,²⁹ but they were not sufficient.

In order to remedy the distress in Ireland, numerous proposals were advanced. Probably the method most favored by outsiders, and most detested by the Irish³⁰ was emigration. M. de Molinay advocated emigration in strong terms,³¹ and Lord Dufferin especially favored it for a considerable part of the western population "vegetating in misery upon their four acre holdings."³² Closely connected with this method in the minds of the reformers was the question of fishery rights. A writer signing his communication "J. P." wrote to the Editor of the London Times that if the Government would encourage emigration on the one hand and be a little more liberal in fishery grants on the other, it would do all that was necessary for the western part of the country.³³ Other writers advocated government works of a produc-

26. Mrs. O'Shea (Parnell). Charles S. Parnell, His Love Story and Political Life, I 151.

27. The outrages will be treated later.

28. The London Times, October 20, 1879.

29. Ibid.

30. At least by the Land League.

31. French Opinion on the Irish Crisis, 25.

32. Lord Dufferin on the 3 F's, 24.

33. The London Times, November 17, 1879.

tive character,³⁴ and to support this proposal, they declared that many of the people preferred work to charity.³⁵ Of course, remedies by legislation were proposed. A letter written by F. H. O'Donnel to the Editor of the London Times declared:

1. That the remedy for Irish tenantry was to be found in the regulation of industry and society, not in convulsion.
2. That the remedy was not the eviction of the landlords, but the security of the tenants.
3. That the Land Act of 1870 should be completed in provisions, followed in principles, and amended in machinery
4. That the Ulster Custom should be extended.³⁶
5. That the establishment and development of a peasant proprietary should be facilitated.³⁷

Of the remedies suggested in the preceding paragraph, emigration and charity were followed quite extensively. Statistics for 1879 show that 47,364 people, an increase of 5,738 over the previous year, left Ireland and that all except 299 were natives.³⁸ People charitably inclined aided the poor who were trying to find a home elsewhere. Nugent, a priest of Liverpool, in spite of opposition, enabled fifty families to leave Connemara for Boston with the ultimate destination of Minnesota.³⁹ With the hard times of the next year, the emigration movement practically doubled, for 95,857 persons left Ireland.⁴⁰

34. The London Times, November 18, 1879.

35. Ibid., January 7, 1880.

36. Another writer who favored extending the Ulster Custom declared that "confidence engendered by fair dealing" was the best weapon against communism (The London Times, July 15, 1880).

37. The London Times, August 10, 1880.

38. Ibid., February 26, 1880.

39. Ibid., July 26, 1880.

40. Ibid., March 28, 1881.

As previously indicated, charity was a prolific source of help. Kind resolutions and useful money poured in on Ireland from many places. A large and influential meeting held in the Liverpool Council Chamber, January 20, 1880, and presided over by the mayor adopted the following resolution: "That the meeting desires to express its deep and heartfelt sympathy with the distress and suffering which now exist in Ireland owing to the failure of the potato crop and the want of employment, and recommends that public subscriptions be entered into for the immediate relief of the sufferers."⁴¹ A committee was at once appointed to take charge of affairs, and direct the use of funds. Several large subscriptions were collected on the spot.⁴² Similar action was taken at Portsmouth and at the City and University of Oxford.⁴³ Churches and even theaters likewise aided the Irish destitute by turning over their collections and receipts on special occasions.⁴⁴

Since thousands of Irish emigrants, in past years, had settled in the United States, this country gave liberally to those in need. Among our heavy contributors were James Gordon Bennett of the New York Herald, George W. Childs, the philanthropist, and Anthony J. Drexel, the head of the banking house of Drexel and Company; in fact, most of the leading men and women in the United States "vied with one another, not alone in the number and volume of their individual donations of money, provisions, clothing, etc.,

41. The London Times, January 21, 1880.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid., January 23, 1880.

44. Ibid., February 2, 1880.

"but in forming citizens' committees in every section, whose sole object was to help in swelling the general fund for the relief of Ireland."⁴⁵ The most prominent members of the Philadelphia Relief Committee were R. M. McWade, John Wanamaker, Thomas Dolan, Thomas Martindale, Dr. William Carroll, William F. Roantree, and Charles A. Hardy. However, not the wealthy and well-to-do alone, but the poor working classes as well came forward with their offerings. The miners of Pennsylvania and the toilers in the mills, factories and workshops of Philadelphia, Boston, Providence, Baltimore, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, St. Louis, New Orleans, Cincinnati and Charleston, and the laborers of small cities, towns and villages gave of their earnings gladly and freely.⁴⁶

In order to take care of these gifts and increase their amount, numerous committees were formed. The most prominent were the Bennett Relief Committee, the Philadelphia Citizens' Committee, the Land League Relief Committee, the Mansion-house Relief Committee, and the Duchess of Marlborough Relief Committee.⁴⁷ Since the last two were the most important, they will be considered here. About the middle of December, 1879, the Duchess of Marlborough, in a letter published in the London Times, pictured the conditions in western Ireland, the necessity of a "vigorous effort of private charity", and proposed a committee of influential and philanthropic citizens to meet weekly at Dublin and decide on applications for assistance. According to the plan, local committees were to work under the Dublin Committee, and superintend the distribution of

45. McWade, R. M. The Uncrowned King, 165.

46. Ibid. Poor factory girls often gave an entire week's savings.

47. Ibid., 164 and 165.

the money for "fuel, food, clothing, especially for the aged and the weak and in small sums to keep the families of the able bodied in temporary distress out of the workhouse."⁴⁸ To avoid charges of proselytism, little money was to be used for schools and that little was to furnish bread and potatoes, and perhaps necessary clothing for little children.⁴⁹ A little less than three weeks later, January 2, 1880, a meeting convened in the Oak-room of the Mansion-house to consider Irish distress, and, although the attendance was large, influential and representative of different creeds and classes, the meeting, with perfect unanimity, decided to open the Mansion-house Relief Fund.⁵⁰

At the time this fund was opened, the Duchess of Marlborough's Fund amounted to over £20,000.⁵¹ The committee of the Duchess gave relief in food, fuel, and clothing, and kept books containing the names of applicants and certain particulars concerning their residence, age, family, occupation, extent of land and amount of relief. The favorite method of granting help was by issuing tickets on local tradesmen. Of course, the disbursements were made by local and sub-committees which were required to keep their books accurately.⁵² Those in greatest need were found to be farmers holding under ten acres, and artisans and skilled laborers in small country towns.⁵³ From December 26 to January 29, the Duchess of Marlborough's Committee established fifty local committees, two hundred and fifty sub-committees, and gave out over £10,000. Five of the local committees were in Donegal, three in

48. The London Times, December 18, 1879.

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid., January 3, 1880.

51. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

52. Ibid., January 31, 1880.

Sligo, nine in Mayo, eight in Galway, four in Roscommon, six in Clare, one in Limerick, and four in Cork.⁵⁴ The Mansion-house Committee, on the other hand, seemed to direct its efforts to Munster where in time it had two hundred and fifty local committees.⁵⁵ Duplication and overlapping were thus minimized. Besides having distinct fields of action, the two funds had distinct sources of support. England, India and Canada were the heaviest contributors to the older fund; America and Australia, to the younger.⁵⁶

Between these two funds a generous rivalry soon developed. Although the Duchess of Marlborough's Fund possessed the impetus of an early start, the Mansion-house Fund obtained the lead in February. By February 26, 1880, the latter reported subscriptions of £82,421 whereas the report of the former showed that only £69,001, 14s, 4d had been subscribed.⁵⁷ Both funds were used

54. The London Times, January 31, 1880.

55. McWade, R. M. The Uncrowned King, 169.

56. The London Times, February 9, 1880.

57. Ibid., February 27, 1880.

An analysis of the Duchess of Marlborough's Fund given at the weekly meeting on March 16 shows the sources of support:

From the Lord Mayor of London	£24,000		
From mayors and towns of England	10,478	14s	10d
From mayors and towns of Scotland	1,340		
From Canada	3,463	12s	6d
From banks, railways, and private companies	5,533	6s	6d
From the Relief Committee in India	4,708	8s	7d
From continental towns	1,332	11s	3d
From private contributors in England	24,583	15s	6d
From private contributors in Ireland	5,497	3s	
From private contributors in Scotland	472		
From church offertories (exclusive of anonymous)	455		
Total	£88,525	11s	3d

(The London Times, March 17, 1880).

for practically the same purposes: food, fuel, clothing, and seed potatoes. Early in March the Duchess wrote to the Lord Mayor of London that the committee had spent £30,000 for seed.⁵⁸ During the first four months of its existence, the Mansion-house Committee received over £150,000 and distributed £120,000 through eight hundred local committees.⁵⁹ Since distress decreased during the summer, the receipts fell off, and arrangements were made to close accounts and report to a general meeting on August 15. When this conclusion was reached, July 26, the treasurer's books indicated that £177,936 had been paid in, and that there was a balance of £5,674 1s 2d on hand. On the same day the Duchess of Marlborough's Committee reported a total of £128,268 paid in, and a remainder of £4,945 10s in the treasury.⁶⁰ About a month later, on September 16, the fund was closed with a balance of £2,700 on hand, and the trustees, under the presidency of the Duke of Leinster, recommended that this should be applied in assisting the emigration of needy families.⁶¹

58. The London Times, March 8, 1880.

59. Ibid., May 10, 1880.

60. Ibid., July 29, 1880.

61. Ibid., September 18, 1880.

CHAPTER III.

ORGANIZATION, OBJECTS, AND METHODS OF THE LAND LEAGUE.

Having considered the situation in Ireland at the time when the Land League appeared, it is now necessary to take up the League and its work. In the early months of 1879, Mr. Davitt and Mr. Devoy visited Mayo where fenian organizations were strong, and where there was much agrarian distress,¹ and in June of the same year O'Connor Power and Parnell began agitation in Mayo and Galway.² On June 7, at Westport in Mayo County, Parnell publicly joined Davitt, and the union of these two chiefs gave fresh impetus to the movement. After the speeches of the four leaders - Davitt, Devoy, Power, and Parnell - had cleared the way, a society called "The National Land League for Mayo" was organized at a convention held at Castlebar on August 16.³ At first Parnell seemed reluctant to extend the land movement to the whole of Ireland, but he was easily convinced of the necessity, and on October 21, 1879, the Irish National Land League was founded by twenty or thirty men who met in one of the rooms of the Imperial Hotel.⁴ Although Davitt was the real founder of the League,⁵ Parnell was selected as its first president. Davitt was given a secretaryship,

1. Dictionary of National Biography, 43:325.

2. Annual Register, 1879, 93.

3. Dictionary of National Biography, 43:325.

4. The London Times, October 23, 1879.

5. Mrs. O'Shea. Charles Stewart Parnell, His Love Story and Political Life, I, 120.

and Biggar was elected treasurer. Dillon, Kettle, Brennan and Sexton were the most prominent of the other men present.⁶

The new organization at once began an active campaign to establish local branches, and success attended its efforts.⁷ The local branches forwarded reports and a large share of their receipts to the Central Executive at Dublin. As the rules were amended in September of 1881, the local branches were required to forward seventy-five per-cent of their collections to the Central League.⁸ Of course, the funds required to carry on the work of the League were large. Besides the contributions of the local branches, the assistance came largely from outsiders. Parnell's American trip resulted in £70,000 being sent to Egan, the new Land League treasurer, in Dublin.⁹ In fact, an analysis of the returns reported at the Executive meetings indicates that by far the larger per-cent came from America. Thus, a meeting, May 10, 1880, reported a weekly contribution of £2,900, all except £500 of which came from the United States;¹⁰ and, again, a meeting held on July 18, 1881, reported £1,885 19s, but £1,000 of this came through the Irish World which handled a large per-cent of the money sent from the United States.¹¹ A copy of this paper, dated August 6, 1881, declared that its subscriptions received during the week

6. Healy, T. M. Why There Is an Irish Land Question and an Irish Land League, 86.

7. On November 9, 1880, Brennan reported to the Executive Meeting that 136 new branches had been established since the last meeting. However, it must be remembered that the agitation reached its highwater mark during that fall (The London Times, November 10, 1880).

8. The London Times, September 15, 1881.

9. McWade, R. M. The Uncrowned King, 172.

10. The London Times, May 11, 1880.

11. Ibid., July 20, 1881.

made its total \$135,000.¹² Forster,¹³ however, flatly denied the statement, declaring that he had made an analysis of the subscriptions of the Land League, and that the total receipts for the year were only £10,707; of this sum, he affirmed that £4,800 had come from the Irish World, £4,543 from other American sources, £81 from Great Britain, and £162 from Ireland.¹⁴ Thus, if our authority is correct, more than nine-tenths of the Land League funds came from America and only one and a half per-cent from Ireland.

Undoubtedly, Parnell was the man most responsible in securing these funds, for he was an Irish landowner, a polished scholar and a gentleman, but, according to Mr. Murphy, his lieutenants were also men of energy, ability, and disinterestedness. The same writer likewise states that the members of the League were representative men, and that its supporters included bishops, priests, doctors, and shopkeepers.¹⁵ In considering the character of the leaders and members, it must be remembered that men unconnected with the League belittled all its supporters and especially its leaders. Among these was the Attorney-General for Ireland. At the State trials,¹⁶ he declared that Parnell was the only important leader who was a landholder, that Dillon was a doctor, that Biggar and Egan were dealers in provisions, and that Walsh was a commercial traveller, Harris a road contractor, O'Sullivan a national schoolmaster, Sheridan a publican, Gordon a

12. The London Times, August 19, 1881.

13. He was Chief-Secretary for Ireland.

14. The London Times, August 19, 1881.

15. Catholic World, 43:27 and 28 (Article by Mr. Murphy).

16. See Pages 76-78.

shoemaker, and Nally nothing.¹⁷ In considering all charges, it is necessary to state, that, as in all organizations, some of the leaders were men of good character and others of bad. Of course, the same statement is true of the quarter million of men, who, Dillon declared at the Woodford meeting on March 21, 1881, formed the Irish Land League.¹⁸

The leaders of the organization met in weekly executive or council meetings in Dublin. At one of the earliest of these meetings, it was decided to send a questionnaire to the tenants asking the nature of their holdings, the length of time they had been in occupation, the names of their landlords and whether they were resident or absentee, a description of the land, the rent per acre, Griffith's valuation¹⁹ of the same, how often the rent had been raised since 1848, and whether or not the landlord or his agent had to be consulted before a marriage could take place in the tenant's family.²⁰ Usually, the business transacted was of a dry nature. Collections for the past week were always reported, and disbursements were given. Money was voted for the destitute, the evicted, and for the defence of men arrested by the Government as well as for the prosecution of landlords who had made them-

17. Gladstone and the 3 F's, 25.

18. The London Times, March 22, 1881. Mr. Murphy claimed one million able bodied men as members, but he must have included the foreign branches of the League (Catholic World, 43:27).

19. Griffith's valuation was a conception of the net yield of a farm fixed for purposes of taxation by Sir Richard Griffith (Bonn, M. J. Modern Ireland and Her Agrarian Problem, 68).

20. The London Times, November 7, 1879.

selves liable to the law by undue cruelty.²¹ Above these executive meetings were the great conventions, and below them the local meetings which will soon be considered.

Having finished this bried sketch of the Land League and its organization, our next purpose is to point out its objects, teachings, and methods of work. The principal object had been fore-shadowed by Power in one of his early speeches. "If you ask me", he said, "to state in a brief sentence what is the Irish land question, I say it is the restoration of the land to the people of Ireland. And if you ask me for a solution of the land question in accordance with philosophy, experience and common sense, I shall be equally brief and explicit. Abolish landlordism and make the man who occupies and cultivates the soil the owner of the soil."²² The Mayo Land League was based on the declaration that the land of Ireland belonged to the people, but it admitted the principle of compensation to landlords.²³ The Irish National Land League adopted kindred principles, but it went beyond the Mayo League.²⁴ According to T. P. O'Connor, one of the leading members, the National League had to prevent famine, deal with evictions, and keep the spirit of the people from being broken.²⁵ Mr. Murphy, in a clearer statement, gave the objects as follows:

1. To protect the people against capricious eviction.
2. To restrain and curb the craving for land which impelled people to take farms from which others had been evicted.

21. The London Times, October 20, 1880.

22. The Annual Register, 1879, 93.

23. Dictionary of National Biography, 43:325.

24. This will be brought out later.

25. Contemporary Review, 38:988.

3. To reduce exorbitant rents.

4. To root the tiller in the soil.²⁶

In a conference of Irish members of Parliament Parnell moved and carried the motion: "That we cannot accept in behalf of the people of Ireland as a final and satisfactory settlement of the land question any measure which fails to secure the ownership of the soil for the occupier."²⁷

To be sure, Parnell and the Land League advanced plans which coincided. The leader's early scheme was:

1. To suspend for two years ejectment for non-payment of rent and for overholding in the case of all holdings valued at or under £10 a year.
2. To suspend for a like period on all holdings the right to recover a higher rent than the Poor Law valuation²⁸ of the same.

These measures he declared to be temporary until Parliament could pass an act whereby the land could be transferred to the tenants on the following terms:

1. The department was to advance the tenant the whole or part of the purchase money.
2. The holding was to be charged with an annuity of five per cent in favor of the department and repayable in thirty-five years.
3. The tenants were to be able to purchase a holding on

26. Catholic World, 43:27.

27. The London Times, May 19, 1880.

28. This was authorized to meet the requirements of the assessment of poor-rates and was made by the guardians of each poor-law union independently and carried out by local administrators appointed by them; hence it varied from place to place, and did not correspond with the town land valuation made by Sir Richard Griffith (Notes on Government Valuation of Land in Ireland, 5).

tendering a sum equal to twenty years of the Poor Law valuation, and let the estate to tenants at a rent equal to three and a half per cent of the purchase money.²⁹

The objects, methods, teachings, and enthusiasm of the members of the Land League, however, are best revealed, not in the carefully drawn plans of the president and his council, but in the monster mass meetings held throughout Ireland. Over a week before the movement was definitely organized, Parnell was the chief speaker at Navan.³⁰ An enthusiastic audience of twenty thousand people greeted him, and the Reverend Michael Tournay, in a speech seconding a resolution welcoming Parnell, declared that wherever Ireland had an enemy Parnell was hated and wherever a trueborn Irishman lived he was loved. Nerved by this introduction and by such signs as "Tenant right against landlord might", "Farmers who pay rents they cannot afford encourage rack renting", "Home Rule", "Down with land robbers", "Reduce the rents", "Irish land in Irish hands", "A peasant proprietary", "The active party only are Ireland's representatives", "Parnell's opponents are Ireland's enemies", and "Welcome to Parnell", the orator delivered an eloquent speech which reached its climax in the following words: "Then, I say, the only course for the tenant farmers of Ireland is this - now that they are in possession of their farms to see that they remain in possession (Loud cheers). Go to your landlord; if he disagrees with your estimate of what a fair rent should be, ask him to appoint one man and say you will appoint another, and they will settle it between them (Cheers). If he refuses this

29. The London Times, April 27, 1880.

30. Navan is in Meath County.

"arrangement, offer him what you consider you can fairly be called upon to pay in these times, and ask him for a clear receipt. If he refuses to give you a clear receipt, put the money in your pocket and hold it till he comes to his senses."³¹

Despite this speech of Parnell, other orators soon surpassed him in vehemence. At the Gurteen meeting in Galway County, Davitt declared "rent in any circumstances, in prosperous times or in bad times was an unjust and immoral tax upon the industry of the people",³² and he concluded that "people should hold by their land and pay rent only when they had a surplus after everything else and could afford it."³³ After Davitt had concluded his speech, Daly followed with one urging the tenants to pay no rent "except to shopkeepers whom they might want again, and that if anyone was evicted the people should assemble in thousands and reinstate him."³⁴ Then Killen, taking the place of Daly, declared that the land had been confiscated three times in favor of the aristocracy and that what was wanted now was a restitution in favor of the people; he "left it to them to say whether by the pen, the pencil, or the sword."³⁵ When a Catholic priest deprecated force, the orator replied that he did not recommend force, but that he would be glad to see "every man of them carrying a rifle and knowing how to use it."³⁶

31. The London Times, October 13, 1879.

32. Ibid., November 20, 1879.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.

A few weeks later, Brennan, perhaps desirous of sharing the fate of the Gurteen orators,³⁷ declared at Balla, Mayo County: "Whatever might have been the words used by Mr. Davitt at the Gurteen meeting, he adopted them; and if he knew them, he would repeat them, for he believed in his soul that they were the words of justice and truth."³⁸ In burning language, the orator painted the brother lying dead in the ditch, the child dying from hunger, and the policeman, who, in 1847, fired upon an unoffending crowd and a few minutes later found the bullet lodged in the breast that had nourished him. The speaker urged the people to pay no rent until they had obtained a reasonable reduction and to till no land from which another had been evicted. If such a wretch be found, he said, "Mark him and cast him out as an unclean thing."³⁹ Although Parnell was present, he merely congratulated Brennan on his magnificent effort and contented himself with a temperate address.⁴⁰

Early in May of 1880, another enthusiastic meeting, with bands playing and banners flying, was held at Irishtown, Mayo County. Parnell, the leading speaker, moved the following resolution: "That we hail with the utmost satisfaction, the overthrow of the late Government and regard the defeat of the landlord candidates at the general election as heralding the proximate downfall of landlordism and the establishment of a national pro-

37. They were arrested and so was Brennan. See Page 75.

38. The London Times, December 6, 1879.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid. At times Parnell was cautious, and seemed to desire to stay within the limits of the law. In February of 1881, he retracted a statement made at Clare advising the people to plow up the ground when evicted, for he discovered that such an act was punishable by seven years penal servitude (The London Times, February 23, 1881).

"proprietary for Ireland."⁴¹ In his speech, Parnell defended the Land Address, and emphasized the necessity of forming local branches; he declared that if the farmers of a county combined and followed the Land League advice, it was impossible for them to be overwhelmed, for the League would defend them in court by fighting points of law and out of the courts by creating an irresistible public sentiment in their behalf.⁴²

Towards the close of July, a rather inflammatory meeting was held at Keash on the border of Sligo County, and resolutions were passed pledging the people to abolish landlordism and substitute therefor a system of peasant proprietary. J. B. O'Quinn, the principal speaker, declared that the object of their meeting was embodied in the motto, "The land for the people", and that they pledged anew their resistance until that "cursed institution, that blasphemous wrong, Irish landlordism, was swept from the country, and the people who tilled the soil were the owners of it."⁴³ When he urged that landlordism was one of the chief props of English power in the country, a man in the crowd called out, "We will pull the prop down",⁴⁴ and the speaker replied, "Pull the prop, and the old rickety, crumbling edifice shall soon be laid low."⁴⁵ Continuing, the orator urged the people to follow Dillon's advice and to make stern and desperate resistance to all efforts to wrest the harvest from them. A resolution was then passed stigmatizing as

41. The London Times, May 4, 1880. See Page 68.

42. The London Times, May 4, 1880.

43. Ibid., July 28, 1880.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

an enemy of the human race any landlord who should evict a tenant in the year of famine, and as a traitor to his country anyone who should take the lands from which another had been evicted. In speaking for this resolution, P. J. Sheridan declared that it often occurred to him that the men of Ireland would have to take a "leaf from Runnymede and unsheath their arms and win their Magna Carta."⁴⁶ Although he admitted that moral force agitation had never yet won a victory or liberal concession except through fear of powder and lead, Sheridan, with greater moderation than his predecessor, expressed himself as willing to merge his individual opinion with that of the majority, and accordingly he asked them to try once more the efficacy of moral force agitation.⁴⁷

In the following September, a better weapon was added to the armory of the Land League at Ennis.⁴⁸ This meeting marked a turning point in the history of the organization. Encouraged by the music, the procession, and such signs as " 'Tis near the dawn", "The harvest belongs to America", "You bet we win", "What's trumps", "The peoples' rights", "Ireland no longer asleep", "The two P's -- Parnell and the people", and "Ireland a nation", Parnell declared: "When a man takes a farm from which another has been evicted, you must shun him in the fair and in the market place, and even in the house of worship by leaving him severely alone, by putting him into a moral Coventry, by isolating him from the rest of his kind as if he was a leper of old -- you must show

46. The London Times, July 28, 1880.

47. Ibid.

48. Ennis is in Clare County, and the meeting was held on September 19.

"him your detestation of the crime he has committed; and you may depend upon it, if the population of a county in Ireland carry out this doctrine, that there will be no man so full of avarice, so lost to shame as to dare the public opinion of all right-thinking men within the county and to transgress your unwritten code of laws."⁴⁹ Continuing, the orator urged that if all united, if the five hundred thousand tenants struck against the ten thousand landlords, the English Government would be utterly unable to obtain sufficient police and soldiers to make them pay their rents.⁵⁰

At a meeting held at Ballybricken, on the outskirts of Waterford, nearly three months later, Parnell advised his audience of eight or ten thousand to push on the work of the Land League by organizing branches in every parish of Ireland, and he declared that if they did so no cutting off or imprisonment of leaders⁵¹ would do the slightest harm, that before long the people of Ireland would enter for the first time on the paths of prosperity and national independence, and that they would succeed in destroying landlordism, one of the last props of British misrule in Ireland.⁵² More than six months later at Feenagh, Limerick County, Dillon likewise urged the farmers to stand firmly by the Land League which he described as "their shield and buckler."⁵³

49. The London Times, September 20, 1880.

50. Ibid.

51. In reference to arrests. See Pages 76-78.

52. The London Times, December 6, 1880.

53. Ibid., June 21, 1881.

Of course, it is impossible to consider all the important meetings held. The total number must have reached up in the thousands, for from June 30, 1879 to June 30, 1880, forty-six were held in Galway, sixty-two in Mayo, and eighty-six in Sligo (The London Times, August 18, 1880). Again, from March 14, 1880 to November 2, 1880, ninety-six meetings were held in

This brief account of the Land League meetings would be incomplete without a description of the greatest of all demonstrations - the one accorded to Parnell at Dublin on September 25, 1881. The people to the number of twenty or twenty-five thousand met at seven o'clock in Beresford-place at the back of the custom house. Headed and accompanied by twenty bands whose members were clad in quasi-military uniform, they marched to Harcourt-street terminus where Parnell was to arrive at eight o'clock from Avondale, his residence in Wicklow. A carriage drawn by six white horses moved in front of the procession; the vehicle was reserved for the use of Parnell and his immediate associates. The thronging, torchlight parade blocked all traffic, and threatened grave danger to the screaming women and children. Although fifty constables and a number of inspectors kept the approach to the terminus, they were frequently driven back by the enthusiastic throng, which displayed such banners as "Union is strength", "The land for the people", "God save Ireland", and "Parnell and victory." The hero of the hour, accompanied by Sexton, Dillon, Egan, and other prominent members of the League, arrived at twenty

Limerick County alone (The London Times, November 16, 1880). Ninety-one speeches, according to a supposedly incomplete table, were made by members of Parliament during the period under discussion. Six of these speeches were delivered in Wexford, eight in Kerry, eleven in Cork, and sixteen in Galway. The fall, after the closing of Parliament, was the favorite time. Thus, nine were made in September of 1880, nineteen in the following month, and seven in the first nine days of October, 1881. Healy made five of these speeches, T. Harrington six, Biggar seven, Dillon nine, Parnell twelve, and M. Harris twenty. Thirteen other members made from one to three speeches each (Compiled from a table in McWade's, The Uncrowned King, 214-221).

minutes after eight. The procession then reformed and moved through various streets to the Land League rooms in Upper Sackville Street where, by half past ten, more than thirty thousand people had assembled, and the throng was so dense that Parnell with difficulty reached the office.

There, an address was presented to him from the Land League branches of the City of Dublin in the name of the united people of Ireland. Since this address referred to his noble qualities as a leader, combining statesmanship with patriotism, and declared that the usurpation of the "divine prerogative of the people - namely the ownership of the soil - plundered by a foreign government under the guise of law should now and forever be abolished",⁵⁴ Parnell nerved himself for an appropriate reply, and declared: "Any man in Ireland to-day, or any woman, or any child who has had the opportunity of sharing in and doing this great work, will live to be proud of it, will live to be thanked by those not yet born; for, believe me, the spirit that is alive in Ireland to-day, the spirit which is exhibited by the silent martyrs in Kilmainham and the other gaols (hisses), the spirit which is exhibited by Michael Davitt far off in Portland Prison, willing to suffer five more long years of penal servitude - provided that you on your side do your part and your duty - the spirit which is shown in every quarter and in every corner of Ireland, that spirit will never die (cheers) until it sweeps that detested alien rule, with its buckshot and its bayonets clear away over the channel whence it came, never to return (cheers and hisses)".

54. The London Times, September 26, 1881.

After the orator had declared that it would have been impossible for any civilized government to act as the English Government had acted towards Ireland during the last six months, he advised it, burdened with seven hundred years of failure, to give up Ireland for otherwise the "united voice of the civilized world" would bear the misrule no longer and would make it give up.⁵⁵ Sexton then followed with a popular speech, declaring that Dublin had covered herself with glory by giving to the greatest man ever produced by the Irish race "the greatest demonstration ever known in the history of Ireland or any country in the world."⁵⁶ In a happy climax, he declared: "The rosy dawn is breaking, the night of slavery is dying out, and whereas Ireland poor has long been Ireland enslaved, I tell you that Ireland prosperous will soon be Ireland independent."⁵⁷ Notwithstanding these and other inflammatory speeches and the fact that the crowd did not break up until half past twelve, no riots took place.⁵⁸

Closely connected with these monster meetings in character and in methods and frequently in enthusiasm were the local and general conventions, but only one of each will be considered: the local convention at Dungarven with special reference to the speeches, because the career of the Land League was drawing to a close; and the big general convention at Dublin, because it summarizes, in a way, the work and influence of the League.

55. The London Times, September 26, 1881.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid.

The first mentioned was held last, on October 5, 1881, at Dungarven in Waterford County. Of course, as the term convention implies, the local branches of the League were represented at the county convention and matters of common interest were attended to, but the principal interest centers in the speeches, and in the five members of Parliament present.⁵⁹ The most important member, Parnell, declared that if no tenant farmer paid unjust rents and no one took a farm from which another had been evicted, the rights of the Irish farmers would be secured without any land bill,⁶⁰ and he urged them to pay no rack rents, to give laborers fair wages and to use clothes of Irish manufacture. The next speaker, F. H. O'Donnell, attacked the Land Act and Forster, declaring that the Chief-Secretary drew £4,000 a year for dirty work, but even on double that salary he could not be anything but the failure he was.

In a speech delivered at the evening session, Parnell said: "If the people stood together firmly and determinedly, they would be able to save - well, he would not say what (cheers); at all events, there could be no bounds to Ireland's progress. They could not set a termination to the progress of a nation (cheers), and Ireland was entitled to her full rights as a nation, if she could get them; and they were determined to get for her as much of them as they could (cheers)."⁶¹ An equally popular speech was made by Redpath, who, in reply to an address, appealed to the passions of his audience by declaring that no people had been so

59. They were Parnell, O'Donnell, Healy, Richard Power and T. Leamy.

60. See Page 74.

61. The London Times, October 6, 1881.

cruelly treated or so much maligned as they. Continuing in the same vein, he told them: "Never had a people a nobler mission than yours, and never was a people surer of a speedier victory (cheers). Irish landlordism, like a fiend, is a mad monster of

'Such hideous mien
As to be hated needs but to be seen' (cheers).

No compromise (cheers). Let your war cry be the total and immediate abolition of Irish landlordism; drag the crimes of the landlords into the light of day; make their names a hissing and a byword in every nation, and before long they will fall on their knees and call for the rocks to cover them. Take every installment of justice,⁶² great or small, that your leaders can extract from the fear of the tyrants, but never cease for one second to demand each and every right which God intended you to enjoy (Loud cheers)."⁶³

Notwithstanding the enthusiasm of this convention, it had been eclipsed by the General Convention which met at Dublin the previous month, September 15, 16, and 17. This assembly consisted of one delegate from every branch of the Land League in Ireland as well as every branch of the Labor League, the Central Executive of the Land League being ex officio members. The delegates, to the number of seventeen hundred, sat by counties, and every county and practically every parish in Ireland was represented. Twenty-three members of Parliament were present. The members of the Central League, the members of Parliament who sat on the opposition side of the House of Commons, and clergymen of

62. In reference to the Land Bill.

63. The London Times, October 6, 1881.

all denominations who were members of the League were admitted to the floor of the house with the liberty of speaking but not of voting. The balcony was reserved for the women.⁶⁴

To guide the work of the convention and save time, various resolutions were drawn up and later adopted. The substance of the declarations follows:

1. The cause of all Irish ills can be traced to alien rule, and Ireland neither can nor will be prosperous and content until self government is restored to her.
2. The Coercion Act⁶⁵ is founded upon "fraud, devised in a spirit of malignant hypocrisy and executed in gratification of private vindictiveness, and in tyrannical suppression of admitted public rights upon men whose only crime" ⁶⁶ is courageous devotion to the people. Michael Davitt,⁶⁷ and all other prisoners must be released, for the people will not believe the Land Act in the right spirit or for improvement so long as one man is detained under the Coercion Act.
3. Any settlement of the land question is impossible unless that settlement abolishes landlordism "root and branch" and makes the tiller of the soil the owner of the soil, and since the Land Act is not in accordance with this principle, the Land League will present the "same solid combination against landlordism which has worked such magnificent results in the past two years."⁶⁸
4. The Executive, while preserving the unity and strength of the Irish National Land League, will select test cases upon estates in various parts of Ireland, and cause these cases to be brought before the Court in order to test the Land Act.
5. Tenants must not make any engagement to pay rent for a longer period than one year pending the decision upon the test cases.
6. The local branches should forward reports to the Executives in the districts in all cases where tenants are evicted so that the proper officials may decide if any court steps can be taken to provide for their reinstatement.

64. The London Times, September 15, 1881.

65. See Pages 72-74.

66. The London Times, September 15, 1881.

67. See Page 78.

68. The London Times, September 15, 1881.

7. The Land League favors laborers and will aid them in accordance with the Act in the building of dwellings and in the development of the labor market in Ireland.
8. Each farmer should set aside a small proportion of his land for laborers, members of the League, employed upon his farm.
9. Irish members ought to press for insertion of powers in the promised County Government Bill of next session giving to county boards the power to acquire land by compulsory purchase for the benefit of the laborers.
10. Members of the Land League should use Irish manufactures and encourage native industries.
11. Industrial and Labor Departments will be organized in the central office of the League, and the Executive is empowered to establish and take all needful steps to secure prompt and efficient action.
12. Branches connected with the Land League shall forward all funds collected less twenty-five per cent for local expenses.
13. The Executive is authorized to draw up rules in conformity with the resolutions of this convention and for the purpose of carrying these resolutions into effect, and they shall be binding upon the members of the League and upon all of its branches.⁶⁹

After this dry but necessary statement of resolutions, it is refreshing to consider briefly some of the messages and speeches. On the opening day words of cheer were read from the National Land League of the United States,⁷⁰ which claimed a thousand branches, and on the same day, Lewis Smith, a minor delegate from Antrim, made a lively speech on the evils of landlordism and Ireland's duty of justifying herself before the world. With dramatic vigor, he declared: "Should the government drive them to the last resort then they should put their backs to the

69. The London Times, September 15, 1881.

70. Parnell founded this League just before he returned from America.

wall and say like Macbeth

'Lay on Macduff

And damn'd be he that first cries, Hold, enough.' "71

The next day the following telegram from the Irish World was read:

"In the name of the exiled race evicted by landlords, in the name of Davitt in chains (cheers); in the name of posterity, whose fate is in your hands; in the name of justice, humanity, and self interest, we adjure the Convention to unfurl the banner of No Rent

(hear, hear). Hold the harvest (renewed cheers). Do this, and

American friends will redouble support; if this is not done,

America will be disheartened. Letters are pouring in indicating

this."72 Still another message from the Irish World condemnatory

of the Land Bill was highly cheered,73 and a delegate provoked a

tempest of applause by proposing cheers for the Irish Republic.74

In addition to the monster mass meetings and conventions, the Land League used the papers to spread its teachings. The first

and most notorious of these papers was the Irish World edited by

Patrick Ford of New York; for some time the League distributed

copies of this paper among the tenants. Since the American paper

was exceedingly radical, however, and was condemned by its

enemies as openly recommending murder as an instrument of agita-

tion,75 and moreover, since the Land Leaguers wished a paper at

71. The London Times, September 16, 1881.

72. Ibid., September 17, 1881.

73. Ibid.

74. Ibid.

75. A Times editorial of September 29 declared it would be better for the Land League to go penniless than to receive "subsidies from the blood stained hands of men who are assassins in all but the courage to execute what they recommend."

home and under their control, Parnell formed the Irish National Newspaper and Publishing Company. He, and Egan, treasurer of the League, were the chief shareholders; but the Land League supplied the money, and Parnell held the shares as trustee of the Association. Incorporated in the new company were the Shamrock, the Flag of Ireland, and the Irishman, all weekly papers of rather small circulation, but extreme opinion. The first was discontinued, and the Flag of Ireland was rechristened United Ireland. William O'Brien, an ardent nationalist, edited both the Irishman, and United Ireland which became the accredited organ of the Land League.⁷⁶

After this consideration of the theoretical or proposed methods of the Land League, the time has now arrived to view the commonly recognized and usual methods in their actual working. Frequently, members of the League and their sympathizers frustrated sheriffs' sales for non-payment of rent as at Boyle Court House on July 9, 1880,⁷⁷ and at Cloyne on March 29, 1881,⁷⁸ but reinstatements of those ejected for non-payment of rent were more frequent. Numerous examples might be given, but a few must suffice. Catherine O'Leary, who had been evicted from a farm in Cork County, was forcibly reinstated by a body of armed men who put the furniture back into the house and new locks on the doors.⁷⁹ In a case of reinstatement at Tralee, the restored man was cautioned on pain of death not to leave the house unless he was forcibly put out.⁸⁰

76. Dictionary of National Biography, 43:329.

77. The London Times, July 12, 1880.

78. Ibid., March 31, 1881.

79. Ibid., September 8, 1880.

80. Ibid., September 25, 1880.

One of the most sensational cases of reinstatement, however, took place on a farm near Longhrea. There a widow with five children had been evicted and her cabin knocked down. At midnight Sunday, November 15, 1880, five hundred men assembled and rebuilt the house, which was finished by six o'clock in the morning in spite of the intermission which took place at three o'clock, when Sullivan of the Land League arrived and a regular land meeting was held. At this meeting, although five policemen were present, the man who had occupied the land came forward, gave it up publicly and declared that he was sorry he had taken the widow's farm.⁸¹

But far better than the frustration of sales or the reinstatement of the evicted was the weapon which Parnell had so highly recommended at Ennis. In August, 1880, one landlord on the borders of Leitrim and Cavan received notice that laborers would not be permitted to cut a certain crop of meadow grass.⁸² At Limerick, nearly two months later, a shopkeeper sold a large supply of bacon to a farmer who had taken a farm from which another had been evicted. However, before the purchaser could leave the store, the merchant discovered the facts in the case and thereupon ordered the buyer to return the bacon and receive his money, quit the shop and stay out thereafter.⁸³ The victim who gave his name to the practice was Captain Boycott of Lough Maskhouse, Ballinrobe, Mayo County. When the Captain, on September 22, 1880, sheltered a process server and seventeen policemen, his troubles started. On the next day, crowds collected on his farm,

81. The London Times, November 17, 1880.

82. Ibid., August 18, 1880.

83. Ibid., October 11, 1880.

and within a few days his laborers, workmen, herdsmen, stablemen and laundress were forced to quit work. Even a twelve year old boy who carried his mail was struck and frightened, and the Captain's nephew who took the place of the intimidated carrier was likewise threatened. Finally, shopkeepers were warned not to sell Captain Boycott anything, and the postmistress sent word that since the telegraph messenger had been stopped and warned, she considered it unsafe to send more messages. In his open appeal for help, the Captain declared that his crops were trampled upon, carried off and destroyed wholesale, that the locks on his gates were smashed, the gates thrown open, the walls thrown down and the stock driven out on the roads, that he could not possibly get workmen, and that his ruin was the openly avowed object of the Land League.⁸⁴

Although this appeal resulted in the relief expedition which kept Captain Boycott from ruin, the practice of boycotting rapidly became general and efficacious. In writing to an American sympathizer, Parnell boasted that seven thousand men had been required to save the crops on a single farm and that every pound of potatoes and every turnip saved had cost the Government a shilling. He declared that it was a revelation to the Land League, a God-send, and that henceforth their gospel to the tenants of Ireland was summed up in one word, boycott.⁸⁵ Other leaders quickly adopted the powerful weapon, and the Land League instituted local courts which investigated cases and either passed or withheld the dread sentence of boycott. In the hands of the masters the new

84. The London Times, October 11, 1880.

85. The Annual Register, 1880, 121.

device was even used to extend the organization and fill the coffers of the League.⁸⁶

The increasing utility and spread of the custom is well brought out by the adoption of the following resolution by the Balla branch of the Land League on December 14, 1880: "That as certain farms in this neighborhood have been surrendered in consequence of rack rent having been taken, we hereby call upon the land grabbers to surrender them, otherwise we pledge ourselves to use all the means in our power to have them boycotted."⁸⁷ By the beginning of 1881, the power of the new weapon was apparent to the Government, for on January 10, Mr. Fitzpatrick stated in Parliament that large numbers of shopkeepers who held out against the Land League had been completely broken and their customers intimidated.⁸⁸ Fishermen also were boycotted,⁸⁹ and the police were frequently refused service by the hackmen, who, through fear or hatred, denied the use of their vehicles to officials desiring to go to evictions.⁹⁰

When the usefulness of any method is demonstrated, it is likely to be used to excess, and boycotting proved no exception. Thus, the Longhrea branch of the Land League boycotted a man named Coen for speaking to a neighbor who had been previously boycotted,⁹¹ and the Catholic inhabitants of Dublin boycotted the Protestants who had refused to illuminate their houses in honor of Sheehy, the

86. The Annual Register, 1880, 121.

87. The London Times, December 16, 1880.

88. Ibid., January 11, 1881.

89. Ibid., August 8, 1881.

90. Ibid., October 1, 1881.

91. Ibid., September 26, 1881.

fiery Catholic priest who had just been released from prison.⁹² A more interesting case, however, occurred at Mallow, Cork County. There, a girl engaged to marry a young man who was under the ban of the Land League was visited, the night before the appointed day, by a number of members of the League and told that if she married the young man, she and all her family would be equally ostracized. Greatly frightened, the girl broke off or at least postponed the match.⁹³

Once in a while an element of the ludicrous entered into the cases of boycotting as at Moate in Westmeath County. There, a farmer had one of his cattle taken seriously ill, and the village veterinary surgeon had prescribed a copious dose of castor oil as the only remedy. Unfortunately, the one druggist in the neighborhood had been boycotted. Since the farmer had to lose his cow or enter the forbidden precincts, he waited for the cover of darkness, entered the store, and bought half a pint of oil, but he had not proceeded far on his journey home before he was met by a number of Land Leaguers who asked him if he did not know that Reilly's shop was boycotted. In vain the frightened tenant pleaded dire necessity. With grim humor the avengers took the bottle from the farmer, forcibly opened his mouth, and slowly drained the whole contents down his throat. Probably with entire truthfulness the correspondent comments, "He is not likely to incur again the penalties of the unwritten law."⁹⁴

92. The London Times, October 1, 1881.

93. Ibid., October 11, 1881.

94. Ibid., June 20, 1881.

CHAPTER IV.
THE LAND LEAGUE AND CRIME.

In addition to the recognized weapons of the Land League, accusations were made frequently that the numerous cases of violence in Ireland during this period were encouraged or brought about by the League, but before entering into the merits of the charge, it will be advisable to consider some of the crimes of the period.

One of the most common of these outrages was the robbery of arms, but two instances must suffice. On August 11, 1880, the Juno, a Norwegian ship, was entered boldly under the very noses of the police and forty-two cases of guns were carried off.¹ A more typical case, however, occurred on the morning of February 13, 1881, when a party of men with blackened faces entered the house of a couple of ladies named Savage at Castle-island. The invaders declared that they were Land Leaguers and desired arms, but after obtaining a gun, they broke open a box containing £70, some silver, and deposit slips.²

Occasionally, armed men also interfered with the mail. Thus, on January 12, 1881, a mail car from Limerick to Foynes, Tarbet, Listowel, and Tralee was held up by four men, and all the mail bags except one for Foynes were rifled, with the presumable motive of obtaining official documents which were supposed to be

1. The London Times, August 13, 1880.

2. Ibid., February 15, 1881.

passing.³ Likewise, attempts were sometimes made to wreck trains used for the transmission of boycotted cattle. An unsuccessful attempt was made to upset the train from Bally Brophy to Neagh on March 6, 1881. As it happened no cattle were on the train, but several cattle dealers were on their way to the Neagh Fairs.⁴

Another frequent offence of the period was the destruction of crops, burning being the favorite method. Hay was frequently destroyed because certain men thought that the owner paid exorbitant rents,⁵ or because he had ejected tenants for the non-payment of rents.⁶ In Cloghan, King's County, a field of wheat was ruined by rolling with a heavy stone roller and several hayricks were also destroyed.⁷ Such outrages were very common, but space is not sufficient to record more.

The destruction of crops, however, is far surpassed in cruelty by the attacks on unoffending animals for the purpose of bringing pressure to bear upon the owners. Late in October, 1879, the tongue was cut out of a fine brown mare belonging to Charles Gardiner, a tenant of the Earl of Arran in Mayo County, and notice was served on the owner that his own tongue would be cut out if he paid his rent again.⁸ Near Boyle in Roscommon County, May 6, 1881, men cut off the tails and knocked out the teeth of several cattle,⁹ but the offences are too numerous to give details. Sheep were

3. The London Times, January 13, 1881.

4. Ibid., March 8, 1881.

5. Ibid., December 10, 1880.

6. Ibid., January 8, 1881.

7. Ibid., August 24, 1881.

8. Ibid., October 27, 1879.

9. Ibid., May 9, 1881.

stolen or drowned,¹⁰ dogs poisoned,¹¹ horses shot¹² and houghed,¹³ cows burned,¹⁴ and bulls mutilated.¹⁵

In addition to the destruction of crops and the attacks on unoffending animals, property was destroyed or damaged in various ways. Numerous cases are recorded of houses being fired on, and of windows being broken by stones.¹⁶ A better weapon, however, was found in the use of fire. On May 5, 1881, the house of a pound keeper and bailiff named Moran¹⁷ was set on fire at night after the doors had been locked. The servant was awakened by one of the children who seemed to be suffocating, and called the family; and the man and his wife, the servant and five children succeeded with great difficulty in forcing their way out.¹⁸ Because some undiscovered offender, according to the newspaper correspondent, gave information to the bailiffs, eight houses were destroyed by fire in one night, May 26, 1881, on the townlands of Neweestown, Glashaboy, and Carrigheena.¹⁹ On September 27, 1881, a valuable yacht belonging to V. J. O'Connor, who had been involved with his tenants over non-payment of rents and had caused ejectment processes to be served, was burned in the Shannon near Athlone.²⁰ Besides firing on property and burning houses and boats, the disaffected frequently used powder. Because a shopkeeper named Bate-

10. The London Times, December 31, 1879.

11. Ibid., March 10, 1881.

12. The Anarchy in Ireland, 18.

13. The London Times, September 16, 1880.

14. Ibid., March 31, 1881.

15. The Anarchy in Ireland, 18.

16. The London Times, August 18, 1880.

17. Moran lived on Achill Island, and only a few weeks previously his boat and those of three others had been destroyed.

18. The London Times, May 4, 1881.

19. Ibid., May 27, 1881.

20. Ibid., September 29, 1881.

man had taken a farm from which another had been evicted, a kettle of powder was exploded in a window of his shop,²¹ and still later a bomb was exploded in his house.²² Powder was likewise set off at the door of a sheriff's officer who had assisted at evictions, but the most glaring case occurred at Pallas, in Kerry County, when a barrel of gunpowder was exploded at three o'clock in the morning at the rear of a building in which certain active and obnoxious constables were lodged. Although the interior of the house was completely wrecked, only two of the men were injured.²³

Minor cases of intimidation were also frequent. Men with blackened faces pointed guns at tenants and forced them to promise to pay no rent,²⁴ and posted notices threatening with death anyone who paid rent.²⁵ Crowds often forced bidders for farms to back down,²⁶ and militant public opinion frequently frightened merchants into doing the bidding of the League.²⁷ Laborers also were often forced to quit work by such devices as an open grave and threatening notices.²⁸ Sometimes the effigies of landlords and other obnoxious persons were suspended to trees as at Mitchelstown in the case of Mr. Webber, husband of the Countess of Kingston,²⁹ or hanged and burned as at Westport in the case of Captain Boycott.³⁰ Closely connected with these minor cases, but

21. The London Times, May 7, 1881.

22. Ibid., September 30, 1881.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid., October 27, 1879.

25. Ibid., November 8, 1879.

26. Ibid., July 12, 1880.

27. Ibid., January 21, 1881.

28. Ibid., July 18, 1881.

29. Ibid., September 20, 1881.

30. Ibid., September 29, 1881.

more serious in their nature were the miscellaneous acts of violence; for instance, the ear of a farmer was cut off because he had paid his rent,³¹ and riots were not infrequent as at Lurgan in August, 1880, and again at Limerick on September 4, 1881.³²

During these troubled years personal attacks were frequent, and not even women were exempt as the case of Miss Ellard of Newton shows;³³ but the principal violence was directed against land agents, bailiffs, process-servers, police officers, soldiers and landlords.

Probably the most detested of all were the bailiffs and process-servers. On November 19, 1880, near New Pallas, a bailiff was fired at by the nephew of a man whom he had evicted, and received eighteen marks upon his body besides being wounded in the head.³⁴ According to a report from Tralee, a party of sixty armed and disguised men, on April 26, 1881, visited the house of a bailiff and cut off both his ears with shears, and cautioned him to serve no more writs.³⁵ Three days later, a bailiff named King was assaulted at Tully and held over a slow fire till blisters were burned on his body and the hair of his head was singed off.³⁶ About a month later, another bailiff while serving processes was beaten, deprived of his clothes, compelled to swear that he would serve no more writs, and dipped in a cess pool.³⁷ On the following day, a similar official in the same occupation was robbed,

31. The London Times, November 24, 1879.

32. Ibid., August 5, 1880 and September 6, 1881.

33. Ibid., December 27, 1880.

34. Ibid., November 20, 1880.

35. Ibid., April 28, 1881.

36. Ibid., May 2, 1881.

37. Ibid., May 31, 1881.

stripped, ducked in a river, and dragged through furz.³⁸ If the bailiffs escaped with eating their processes,³⁹ a beating with sticks and stones,⁴⁰ a ducking,⁴¹ a rotten egging⁴² or a tarring,⁴³ they were rather lucky.

Possibly even more hated than the bailiffs, who sometimes served writs, were the regular process-servers. On December 5, 1879, at Kilmeena, a crowd of girls attacked a server named Madden and seriously injured him with stones.⁴⁴ Early in the following month, a crowd of men, women and girls, while not openly attacking the server, yet covered him with mud balls and tore down the papers as fast as he put them up.⁴⁵ Like the bailiffs, if they escaped with a ducking, a stripping, a mud coat, or a sprinkling with slop water or boiling water, the process-servers might consider themselves fortunate. The following instance well shows the treatment of the despised server. At Rashlee, James Farmer started to serve one hundred and fifty processes, but a crowd collected, knocked him down, destroyed his duplicate writs,⁴⁶ and forced him to get down on his knees and swear that he would never serve another process. While the server was kneeling, a dog was set on him, and the animal bit him several times and cut his hat to pieces. When his assailants started to divest him of his

38. The London Times, May 30, 1881.

39. Ibid., June 20, 1881.

40. Ibid., August 4, 1881.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid., December 17, 1879.

45. Ibid., January 9, 1880.

46. The others escaped notice because they were in another pocket.

clothes and send him home naked, a woman, kinder than the rest, interceded, but as he left he was pelted with stones.⁴⁷ Occasionally, a server was so seriously injured as to be reported dying.⁴⁸

During this period the personal attacks often resulted in murders. Near New Ross, on August 8, 1880, Thomas Boyd was wounded and his son Charles was killed.⁴⁹ David Ferrick, a land agent, died on August 16 from injuries which he had received four weeks previously.⁵⁰ Lord Mountmorres, who had refused to reduce rents, was murdered the next month.⁵¹ In October a bold attempt in broad daylight to murder Hutchins, a landlord just returning from a trip to collect rents, failed, but Downey, the driver, was killed.⁵² Young Wheeler was the victim in Limerick County.⁵³ While trying to execute a writ at Longh Fay, a bailiff named Mulholland was shot and instantly killed.⁵⁴ At eleven o'clock on January 22, 1881, James Cafferty, who had sworn out information against two men whom he suspected of burning his crops, was found dead on the road between Bangor and Shanaconagle bridge.⁵⁵ At two o'clock on the afternoon of March 4, 1881, Patrick Farley, who had taken in spite of warning a farm from which another had been evicted, was murdered in a cold blooded and daring way.⁵⁶ A little

47. The London Times, April 15, 1881.

48. Ibid., October 15, 1881.

49. Ibid., August 10, 1880.

50. Ibid., August 18, 1880.

51. Ibid., September 29, 1880.

52. Ibid., October 18, 1880.

53. The Anarchy in Ireland, 17.

54. The London Times, December 9, 1880.

55. Ibid., January 25, 1881.

56. Ibid., March 6, 1881.

later a man named Leyden was killed and his son wounded because the former, like Farley, had taken a farm from which another had been evicted.⁵⁷ A few weeks later, as a small farmer and bailiff named Connor was returning home from his father-in-law's funeral, he and his wife were fired on and the man was killed.⁵⁸ Of course, several other murders took place in the period under discussion, but all of the above with some show of plausibility were ascribed to the Land League.

From the preceding paragraphs, it will be noticed that most of the cases of violence took place in the closing months of 1880 and the early part of 1881. In fact, on March 31, 1880, Gladstone had declared at Midlothian that there was an absence of crime and outrage and a general sense of comfort and satisfaction such as had never been known in the previous history of Ireland.⁵⁹ What had brought about the change? Judge Fitzgerald, in charging the Grand Jury at the Munster Winter Assizes, said that "some Organization, acting on the cupidity, the passions and the fears of the people had reduced some districts in the country into anarchy and confusion little, if at all differing from Civil War."⁶⁰ Judge Dowse, if possible, found worse conditions in Connaught. Before he charged the Grand Jury, he reminded them that they were dealing with only four months of crime. He then took up the counties one by one, but the analysis of Leitrim, by no means the most unruly county, will be sufficient for our purposes. In this county

57. The London Times, April 26, 1881.

58. Ibid., May 16, 1881.

59. The Anarchy in Ireland, 6.

60. Ibid., 11.

there were two cases of administering poison, one of endangering life on a railway line, four assaults inflicting actual bodily harm, one burglary, four robberies, one cattlestealing, one case of arson, two cases of killing and maiming cattle, four injuries to property, five unlawful assemblages, one case of assembling armed and disguised, five cases of administering unlawful oaths, seven of attempting to compel people to quit their homes or property or farms, two assaults on dwelling houses, two cases of taking forcible possession, three of intimidation, and twenty-five of sending threatening letters.⁶¹ Thus, there were seventy indictable offences in Leitrim. Roscommon showed only forty-six, but Sligo had one hundred and fifty, Mayo two hundred and thirty-six, and Galway two hundred and ninety-one.⁶² Moreover, it must be remembered that many people feared to reveal their troubles or through fright or sympathy declined to prosecute. Thus, two hundred and fifteen declined to prosecute in Mayo and two hundred and seventy-eight in Galway.⁶³

61. The Anarchy in Ireland, 38.

62. Ibid., 40-43.

63. Ibid., 41-43.

In 1879 there were 4,363 criminal offenders in Ireland and 2,207 convictions; in 1880 the totals stood 4,716 and 2,383; in 1881 they were 5,311 and 2,698 (Statesman's Year Book, 1886, 270). For England and Wales during the same years the figures stood: 16,388 and 12,525; 14,770 and 11,214; 14,786 and 11,353 (Statesman's Year Book, 1886, 262). Consequently, considering the population, there was little difference save in the number of convictions.

It must also be remembered that counter charges were brought against the Government. Police were accused of insulting girls (The London Times, November 8, 1880), and marines of mutilating sheep (The London Times, April 1, 1881). McWade singles out Clifford Lloyd as a fair example of the ruffians Forster deputed to put down free expressions of opinion after the passage of the Coercion Act of 1881. According to McWade, Lloyd brought refined women before sti-

While it is not the purpose of this paper to defend crime, it is the purpose to give a fair statement; consequently the great suffering in Ireland during this period must be kept in mind.⁶⁴ Leaders of the Land League frequently denounced violence and repelled charges of inciting to crime.⁶⁵ At Enniskillen, on November 10, 1880, Dillon, in repelling charges, said: "I say that a greater falsehood was never uttered by human lips than to say that the National Land League ever encouraged assassination or robbery."⁶⁶ Davitt denounced earnestly and incessantly all intimidation, all violence and called upon his hearers to abstain from such methods.⁶⁷ At Mallow in Cork County he told his hearers that nothing injured the cause more with the American people than those causal acts of violence which injustice prompted the people to commit.⁶⁸ Parnell gave Forster the lie when the latter charged him with conniving at or deliberately choosing to remain in ignor-

pendiary magistrates and subjected them to indignities reserved only for the abandoned. Moreover, he had some of the most refined women in Ireland shut up in close confinement on the charge of vagrancy, and children put in dock for "endangering the peace of the Queen" (The Uncrowned King, 159 and 160).

64. See Pages 11-15.

65. McCarthy, J. H. An Outline of Irish History, 118.

66. The London Times, November 11, 1880. The above account or defence is purposely written from the Land League standpoint. However, it should be stated that after the Cork branch of the Land League by an eight to five vote had passed a resolution condemning the robbery of arms on the Juno (The London Times, August 16, 1880), the condemnation of its action by other branches and especially by the Dublin authorities led to the expunging of the condemnatory resolution (The London Times, August 23, 1880).

67. McCarthy, J. H. An Outline of Irish History, 118.

68. The London Times, November 22, 1880.

ance of crime when warned by facts.⁶⁹ Despite the denunciations of the leaders, however, McCarthy's words must be kept in mind: "Men who had been starving, who had seen their family, their friends, dying of hunger, who had been evicted to rot on the roadside for all that their landlord cared - such men were not in the spirit for wise counsels. The proud patience which the gods are said to love is not always easy to assume, at least for ignorant peasants, starving, homeless, smarting under a burning sense of wrong and a wild hopeless desire for revenge."⁷⁰

The lack of this "proud patience" led to crime, but the charges of inciting to crime were not only answered by the speakers mentioned in the preceding paragraph, but by Murphy, Healy, and O'Connor. The first declared that since the English Government desired the suppression of the Land League, it magnified offences. Thus, if an ox stumbled, it was regarded as a malicious injury to cattle and if an outrage was committed in drunkenness, it was charged against the Land League.⁷¹ Healy paid especial attention to the charges of cruelty to animals, and cited figures intended to prove that the English had no just cause of complaint, for the Land League had reduced crime. Then he turned the light on England

69. Dictionary of National Biography, 43:332.

Bonn declared that the Land League did not favor agrarian outrages, murder and the like because it had a better weapon - boycotting (Modern Ireland and Her Agrarian Problem, 79). M. de Molinay declared that the moderate members of the Land League repudiated outrage and even the enthusiasts did not openly recommend it (French Opinion on the Irish Crisis, 15). It must be remembered, however, that while the ignorant peasants were given advice, they were not always told how to obtain their objects, and that groups or mobs will commit acts which they would not think of as individuals.

70. McCarthy, J. H. An Outline of Irish History, 118.

71. The Catholic World, 43:30.

itself. In 1876, he said, there were 953 convictions for cruelty to horses alone, in 1877, 2,726 convictions for cruelty to animals; in 1878, 3,533; in 1879, 3,725; and in the first ten months of 1880, 3,489.⁷² O'Connor, like Healy, declared that open agitation lessened crime and showed by statistics that the figures were much lower than in 1848, that whereas there were two hundred and three agrarian murders in 1849 and forty-five in 1859, there were only five in 1880 - Ferrick, Boyd, Lord Mountmorres, Downing and Wheeler- and that although there were 1,329 agrarian outrages in 1870, there were only 977 in 1879.⁷³

After O'Connor had considered the facts given in the previous paragraph, he asked why such a mistaken sentiment towards the Land League prevailed in England. He believed that the language of the Tory speakers was partly responsible, for they declared that the League unsexed women and referred especially to the

72. Healy, T. M. Why There Is an Irish Land Question and an Irish Land League, 90-95.

Some of the details on these same pages are of interest. Thus in 1877, of the 2,726 convictions, 2,142 were for crimes against horses, one hundred and twenty-one against dogs and fifty-five against cats. The next year, 2,156 were for offences against horses, one hundred and forty-eight against donkeys, eighty-six against dogs, and sixty-four against cats. Some of the details are interesting. There were three convictions for pulling tongues out of horses, one of setting fire to a horse, thirty-one for starving horses, three for starving donkeys, eight for starving pigs, three for starving dogs, two for starving fowls, two for cutting off a dog's tail, two for putting turpentine into or upon dogs, two for burning cats alive, and five for burning or scalding cats. In November of the next year, one society, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, obtained three hundred and twenty-three convictions.

73. Contemporary Review, 38:992 and 993.

O'Connor, like Healy, wrote late in 1880. Downing is spelled "Downey" in the London Times.

Irish peasant woman who had refused to receive the body of Lord Mountmorres. O'Connor replied by saying that the reason the woman refused to receive the body was the belief that the touch of a person untimely slain brought death. Moreover, he charged the Tories with spreading news absolutely false in order to incite the English against land reform and force the Government into coercion. The second reason O'Connor advanced for the erroneous English impression of the amount of crime in Ireland was the attitude of the press, which, he declared, was almost exclusively supplied with Irish news by partisans and mouthpieces of the Irish Landlord Party.⁷⁴

74. Contemporary Review, 38:994-996.

O'Connor's article is the best on the subject, and there is certainly much truth to the arguments he advances in defence of the Land League.

CHAPTER V.

THE CLERGY, AND THE GROWING OPPOSITION TO THE LEAGUE.

Early in October, 1879, a conference of Kilmore priests adopted resolutions urging:

1. All to practice honest economy in view of the hard times and as necessary to win sympathy.
2. Shopkeepers to treat the poor as leniently as possible.
3. Tenants to be "honestly exertive and landlords generously indulgent."
4. God's children to be fervently pious in order to remove the "present visitation" of his "chastening hand."¹

The priests frequently attended the Land League meetings and often took a prominent part as in the case of Sheehy,² and Cleary who presided at a large meeting in which four members of Parliament, including Parnell and Dillon, took part.³ Moreover, they frequently attended executive meetings of the Land League. On August 16, 1881, at a meeting of about fifty presided over by Mr. Sexton, a member of Parliament, five Roman Catholic clergymen were in attendance.⁴ Nevertheless, the priests as a whole advised moderation and frequently attempted to quell riots.⁵ Sometimes they were even bold enough to condemn methods used by the Land League. Thus, Canon Griffin, preaching in the Mill-Street Catholic Church of Cork, chose as his subject "Love", and in the course of

1. The London Times, October 11, 1879.

2. See Pages 45, 46 and 78.

3. The London Times, November 2, 1880.

4. Ibid., August 16, 1881.

5. Ibid., May 13, 1881.

his sermon condemned boycotting as uncharitable and contrary to the laws of God. Although this rebuke caused a deafening chorus of coughing which lasted several minutes, the speaker continued his denunciation of outrages when the semblance of quiet was restored, and in spite of the fact that many of his congregation left.⁶

The fact that the priests were in favor of moderation is further illustrated by the following resolutions unanimously adopted by the clergy of the diocese of Cloyne, and, although these resolutions relate principally to the land question, they will be considered verbatim here: "That we are of the opinion that the fundamental principles on which legislation for the improvement of the Land Code of Ireland should be based are:

1. "That lands for the future should be let at fair and reasonable rents, such rents to be determined by arbitration where necessary, or by a valuation made by a competent tribunal properly constituted.
2. "Fixity or security of tenure as long as such fair rents or others similarly determined to meet the varying circumstances of the times shall be paid.
3. "The free and unrestricted right of sale of the interest in his holding to the tenant under all circumstances.
4. "The affording of every possible facility to tenants to become peasant proprietors by the purchase of their holdings.
5. "The passage of a measure for the reclamation of waste lands, for the purpose of locating on them peasant proprietors.
6. "The improvement of the condition of the labourers of the country by making it obligatory on landholders and farmers to provide them with comfortable cottages to which in every case a reasonable portion of land should be attached.

6. The London Times, August 30, 1880.

The first of these is the fact that the
 system is not a simple one. It is a
 complex one, and it is not possible to
 describe it in a simple way. It is a
 system of many parts, and it is not
 possible to describe it in a simple way.

The second of these is the fact that the
 system is not a simple one. It is a
 complex one, and it is not possible to
 describe it in a simple way. It is a
 system of many parts, and it is not
 possible to describe it in a simple way.

The third of these is the fact that the
 system is not a simple one. It is a
 complex one, and it is not possible to
 describe it in a simple way. It is a
 system of many parts, and it is not
 possible to describe it in a simple way.

The fourth of these is the fact that the
 system is not a simple one. It is a
 complex one, and it is not possible to
 describe it in a simple way. It is a
 system of many parts, and it is not
 possible to describe it in a simple way.

The fifth of these is the fact that the
 system is not a simple one. It is a
 complex one, and it is not possible to
 describe it in a simple way. It is a
 system of many parts, and it is not
 possible to describe it in a simple way.

7. "We, the priests of Cloyne, assembled in diocesan meeting, pledge ourselves to use every effort to have the foregoing resolutions embodied in any legislation that may be proposed for the settlement of the land question; and to coöperate to the full extent of these resolutions, but no further, with any organized body that proposes as its aim the effectuation of such settlement by legitimate and constitutional action.
8. "Being convinced of the sincere desire of the present Government, emphatically expressed by its leading statesmen, to regulate on just and equitable principles the relations between landlord and tenant in Ireland, and of the importance to them as the basis of such legislation of the facts and evidence that may be elicited by the Land Commission lately appointed,⁷ we are of opinion, though justly dissatisfied with the constitution of that commission that it would be for the interest of the tenants to supply them with the information they seek and we therefore recommend our farmers, who may have useful evidence to give, to tender it to the said commission.
9. "We are also of opinion that, as a necessary preliminary to the practical settlement of the land question, the law of primogeniture and entail and other legal obstacles to the free transfer of land, should be entirely abolished, presenting as they do, an almost insuperable obstacle to the creation of a peasant proprietary."⁸

The higher clergy were even more moderate than the priests. Pope Leo XIII in a letter to the Archbishop of Dublin, dated January 3, 1881, said that it was the duty of the clergy to be carefully on their guard not to commit any rash act whereby they might seem "to cast aside the obedience due to the law." Moreover, the pope urged the Archbishop and his colleagues to direct their efforts to "prevent the people in Ireland in this anxious condition of affairs from transgressing the bounds of equity and justice."⁹ Again, towards the close of September, 1881, the Roman

7. See Pages 71 and 72.

8. The London Times, October 2, 1880.

9. Ibid., January 10, 1881.

Catholic bishops of Ireland at Maynoth College adopted a resolution declaring that the new Land Act¹⁰ was of great benefit to the tenant class and a "large installment of justice for which the gratitude of the country" was due Gladstone, his Government, and all who had helped carry the measure through Parliament.¹¹

Although Archbishop Croke of Cashel was a warm friend of the Land League,¹² and many priests took an active part in its work,¹³ nearly all of the higher clergy and most of the priests, while sympathizing with the Land League, condemned violence and counseled moderation. In other words, they refused to accept the extreme demands and methods of the radical Land Leaguers.

The clergy, however, were not alone in their dissatisfaction with the Land League. Some people even criticized it because it did not go far enough. Among these who did not openly support Parnell, and Parnell means the League, the radical Fenians were prominent. At Enniscorthy, on March 28, 1880, and still later at the Rotunda in Dublin they attempted to disturb his meetings, but when, at the latter place, Parnell told of an American gentleman who had handed him thirty dollars with the remark, "Here are

10. See Page 74.

11. The London Times, September 29, 1881.

12. Archbishop Maccabe of Dublin was equally warm as an enemy.

13. Justin McCarthy thought that the most remarkable feature of the Dublin Convention was the large number of priests who attended (An Outline of Irish History, 122), and a Times Editorial of September 19, 1881, referred to "three days of rancorous declamations by professional agitators, American emissaries and Catholic priests."

Other religious bodies, though negligible, were also opposed to outrages and in favor of moderation. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church adopted an address to the Queen desiring a settlement of the question respecting the rights of both landlords and tenants (The London Times, June 15, 1881).

"five dollars for bread and twenty-five dollars for lead", the rank and file of the Irish Republican Brotherhood no longer offered opposition, though the chiefs still withheld their sanction and support.¹⁴ Moreover, some of the radical Irish papers criticized rather severely the work of the Irish leaders in Ireland and in Parliament. The Flag of Ireland, in June, 1880, complained because the Irish tenants had been told to resist payment of rents and keep a firm grip on the land without being told how to do so. One sentence read: "We are equally convinced that the advice offered from the land platforms was thought to be the best that could be given to the people. But it has undoubtedly borne bitter fruit."¹⁵ The Irishman commented in much the same way and showed displeasure at the failure of the Irish Parliamentary Party.¹⁶ Still later, the same paper, in referring to the work of the Land League members in Parliament, said: "They toiled not, neither did they act, yet they appeared to be upheld by some internal consciousness of glory and triumph which kept them in mysterious ease. Nothing which they had asked for had been granted, things they objected to had been sped, measures they pleaded for had been scurvily treated and scoffingly thrown out; and yet they seemed to take it as so many political Uriah Heeps, trained to be humble and rather liking it. . . . The fact is that the session has passed, and absolutely nothing has been enacted for Ireland. Many fond hopes there were and sweet words, kindly expressions of the best inten-

14. Dictionary of National Biography, 43:327.

15. Quoted in the London Times, June 21, 1880.

16. The London Times, June 21, 1880.

"tions, but where are the results?"¹⁷

On the other hand, there were many people who were dissatisfied not with the lukewarmness of the Land League, but by its varied activity. Of course, first and most prominent were the landlords. Immediately after the League was formed, the landed men began to hold meetings and plan methods of resistance,¹⁸ and these meetings became more frequent as Irish conditions grew worse. As a rule, the minutes of these conferences were not made public, but their object was undoubtedly to protect property. Thus, although an attendance of one hundred and five noblemen and landed gentry is recorded at one meeting, the correspondent had to content himself with giving names, saying that the meeting was called to consider the state of Ireland, and remarking that the affairs were private but that protection was desired.¹⁹ Early in December, 1880, a meeting held at Belfast considered measures to be used against the Land League, and drew up a manifesto which was signed by over ten thousand persons representative of all classes.²⁰

One of the prominent organizations which thus aided in fighting the Land League was the Orange Lodge. The following resolution is fairly typical of its attitude: "That this meeting desires to express their detestation of the assassinations, the intimidation of traders, and maiming of cattle and other crimes which prevail in the south and west of Ireland and we call upon Her Majesty's Government to use such prompt and necessary measures

17. Quoted in the London Times, September 6, 1880.

Parnell did not get control of the papers until July, 1881.

18. The Annual Register, 1879, 97.

19. The London Times, October 8, 1880.

20. Ibid., December 4, 1880.

"as shall stamp out this disgraceful state of affairs."²¹ A little later, the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland formed an Emergency Committee to protect loyal subjects in Ireland against the Land League, and asked for subscriptions to aid in the work.²² In carrying out this work, local branches of the Orange Lodge frequently organized meetings called for the same time and in the same town as the Land League meetings in order to counteract the work of the latter; consequently the Government often had to prohibit all meetings in such cases in order to avoid breach of the peace.²³ The Lodges were sometimes aided in their real work of keeping the Land League from frustrating sheriffs' sales by the Property Defence Association. Thus, through the instrumentality of the former, a successful sale was conducted at Parsonstown on February 24, 1881, and through the efforts of the latter, another sale was successfully conducted at Glasnevin on the same day.²⁴ Possibly, however, this opposition to the League was best revealed by the organization of relief expeditions to aid boycotted landlords. The most famous of these was the Boycott Relief Expedition already mentioned, but at least two others are worthy of notice; the one for Miss Harriet Gardiner of Farmhill House at Killala, near Ballina,²⁵ and the other for Mr. Boyd of New Ross who had been boycotted because he had prosecuted two men named Phelan for the murder of his son.²⁶

21. The London Times, December 18, 1880.

22. Ibid., January 8, 1881.

23. Ibid., January 20, 1881.

24. Ibid., February 25, 1881.

25. Ibid., January 25, 1881.

Miss Gardiner had been boycotted so effectually that she had to get her food supply through the police.

26. The London Times, July 26, 1881.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LAND LEAGUE AND THE GOVERNMENT.

During the period covered by this paper, the Government seemed to act very slowly. The Queen, however, in her opening speech to Parliament recognized the "serious deficiency in the usual crops in some parts of Ireland", and spoke of the steps taken by authorities for the distribution of food and fuel when necessary and of the stimulation of the employment of labor by advances on more liberal terms than those prescribed by the existing law.¹ Nevertheless, Shaw, leader of the Irish Home Rule Party, asked, vainly of course, the Government to express regret that although in possession of timely warning and information it had not taken steps to lessen the existing distress, and also to declare that immediate and comprehensive land legislation was necessary for the peace and prosperity of Ireland.² The necessity of this land legislation was rapidly becoming apparent, and Disraeli was keen enough to see it, for when he dissolved Parliament on March 24, 1880, he declared that Parnell was organizing a movement in Ire-

1. The Annual Register, 1880, 9.

The Government did advance money at a very low rate of interest, at one time only one per cent being charged, and thirty-five years exclusive of the two years during which no interest was charged were given for repayment, but the Irish were dissatisfied because the money went to the landlords, who, the Irish claimed, did not use it to the advantage of the people (The Annual Register, 1880, 9-11).

2. The Annual Register, 1880, 9.

land which would menace the unity of the British Empire.³

Soon after the dissolution of Parliament, the new elections were held, and the Liberals gained a decisive victory. According to the London Times' analysis there were three hundred and fifty-one Liberals, sixty-two Home Rulers, and two hundred and thirty-six Conservatives;⁴ Mrs. O'Shea reduces the number of Home Rulers to sixty-one, but declares that thirty-nine of them were Parnellites.⁵ Since the Liberals had obtained power, and the Land League expected to reap the benefit, the Irish showed their joy by organizing processions and parading with noisy bands and blazing torches and tar barrels.⁶

As a result of an early meeting of the Irish members, Parnell was elected leader of their party, receiving twenty-three votes to the eighteen of Shaw.⁷ The forces at his command were not homogeneous; in fact, "many of the component parts were divided from each other by strong antipathies", but his "skillful hand and iron will - his personal power alone - held the great army together for nearly ten years."⁸ The struggle in the new Parliament soon developed. O'Connor Power introduced a bill amending the Land Act of 1870 by repealing those portions of the ninth section which limited the discretion of the courts in awarding compensation in case of ejectment for non-payment of rent. T. P. O'Connor and Parnell urged acceptance as "in the true sense of the word a Bill

3. Dictionary of National Biography, 43:327.

4. The London Times, April 15, 1880.

5. Charles S. Parnell, His Love Story and Political Life, I, 122.

6. The London Times, April 7, 1880.

7. McWade, R. M. The Uncrowned King, 143.

8. Dictionary of National Biography, 43:327.

"for the relief of distress in Ireland and as supplying a most valuable method of peace preservation."⁹ On June 15, Forster announced that the Government would propose to enlarge the discretionary power of the county court judge so that he might under conditions give compensation in certain districts to tenants who had been ejected for non-payment of rent; moreover, he promised to insert a new clause in the Relief of Distress Bill, and proposed that £750,000 of the Irish Church Surplus be loaned to the landlords and others for relief work.¹⁰ Parnell, however, objected to granting loans to landlords and to taking the money out of the church surplus. Forster thereupon conceded £200,000 for outdoor relief,^{//} and raised the grant for fishery piers from £30,000 to £50,000. When this proposition met opposition in the Relief of Distress Bill, the Chief-Secretary for Ireland introduced it as a new bill, the Irish Compensation for Disturbance Bill.¹²

In behalf of his measure Forster urged that it was merely temporary, being limited to the end of 1881, and that the default-

9. The Annual Register, 1880, 77.

The Queen's speech had announced that the Peace Preservation Act for Ireland would not be renewed.

10. The Annual Register, 1880, 77 and 78.

The Irish Party had called for immediate legislation on the land question, but Forster, at first, while admitting the necessity, had declared that there would not be time. The Irish then asked for a temporary measure to stop evictions, but Forster had answered that while the law existed it was necessary to carry it out.

11. Nearly half of all the relief given in Ireland by the Unions during this period was outdoor. In 1879, 39,335 people were thus aided, in 1880, 42,735, and in 1881, 53,638 (Statesman's Year Book, 1886, 270).

12. The Annual Register, 1880, 78.

ing tenant was to be compensated on stringent conditions, that is, if it appeared to the county judge that he was unable to pay his rent not from thriftlessness or idleness but because of the bad harvests of three years and that he was willing to continue in tenancy on just and reasonable terms as to the rents, arrears of rent and otherwise. Moreover, he urged the necessity of such a measure by pointing out the number of evictions which he declared to be a yearly average of 503 for the five years ending in 1877, 743 for 1878, 1,098 for 1879, and 1,073 for the half year ending June 20, 1880.¹³ The opposition to Forster's measure was strong and thirteen hot sittings took place before the third reading was forced through on July 26 by a vote of 303 to 237. Parnell and his immediate followers abstained from voting,¹⁴ and sixteen Liberal members voted against the Government.¹⁵ The measure then went to the House of Lords which after a two nights' debate rejected it on August 3 by a vote of 282 to 51.¹⁶ There, the principal objections to the bill as summarized by Lord Beaconsfield were:

1. It imposed a burden upon a specific class.
2. It brought insecurity to all kinds of transactions.
3. It delegated to a public officer extraordinary powers of fixing the rents of a country.¹⁷

The rejection of the measure led to increased evictions, agitation

13. The Annual Register, 1880, 78.

14. They had previously declared that they could not accept as a final solution any measure which failed to secure the ownership of the soil to the people (The London Times, May 19, 1880).

15. The Annual Register, 1880, 87.

16. The London Times, August 4, 1880.

17. The Annual Register, 1880, 87.

and lawlessness,¹⁸ one of the features being a Lurgan riot.¹⁹

Notwithstanding the fact that the Government had rejected the Irish Compensation for Disturbance Bill, it appointed a commission consisting of the Earl of Bessborough, Baron Dowse, the O'Connor Don, Mr. Kavanagh and Mr. Shaw to inquire into and report on the Land Act of 1870 and the acts amending the same to see what further amendments were necessary or expedient to improve the relations of landlord and tenant in Ireland, and to facilitate the purchase of holdings by the tenants.²⁰ Dillon, with the approval of other members at a Land League Executive meeting, condemned this action as favorable to the landlords and designed merely to gain time.²¹ Various local branches followed the example of the Central Committee and discouraged testifying before the commission. Thus, on August 30, 1880, the Cork Land League gave one of its members named Lane a week to decide whether he would publicly apologize for testifying before the commission or receive the sentence of expulsion.²² Despite the Land League Opposition, however, the Land Commission visited all parts of Ireland and took the views of barristers, solicitors, surveyors, professional valuers, government officials, judges of county courts, clergy of all denominations, and more than five hundred tenant farmers.²³ The re-

18. Mrs. O'Shea, Charles S. Parnell, His Love Story and Political Life, I, 143.

19. The London Times, August 5, 1880.

20. Ibid., July 31, 1880.

21. Ibid., July 28, 1880.

22. Ibid., July 31, 1880.

The Land League frequently made use of the apology and expulsion to hold its members in line.

23. Mr. Gladstone's Commission and Mr. Gladstone, 6.

ports, four in number, declared that social and political conditions in Ireland were the best they had known, complimented the landlords rather highly, and said that the land system and not the wiles of agitators or recent scarcity was responsible for the mischief. Moreover, the reports expressed the belief that the majority of the cultivating tenants would be satisfied with statutory tenure.²⁴

One of the common methods the Government used as the land agitation progressed was the proclamation of meetings. A case is mentioned on December 19, 1880.²⁵ Early in the next month two meetings were proclaimed as likely to lead to disturbance,²⁶ and towards the close of the month all meetings in Clare were forbidden. A few months later Galway was proclaimed under the Arms Act,²⁷ and from then on proclamations became frequent.

In the legislation of 1881 the Government refused concessions. It would not even bring in the Land Bill first and the Coercion Bill afterwards.²⁸ On January 6, the opening day of Parliament, Forster stated that he would introduce a bill for the better protection of person and property in Ireland and a bill to amend the law relating to the carrying and possession of arms and for the preservation of the public peace in Ireland, and on the same day Parnell declared that he would oppose such a measure.²⁹ Eighteen days later Forster asked permission to introduce vigorous measures for Ireland; one of these practically suspended the writ

24. Mr. Gladstone's Commission and Mr. Gladstone, 6.

25. The London Times, December 20, 1880.

26. Ibid., January 5, 1881.

27. Ibid., January 22, 1881 and April 13, 1881.

28. McCarthy, J. H. An Outline of Irish History, 119.

29. The London Times, January 7, 1881.

of habeas corpus, and the other enabled the police to search for arms and arrest the guilty. On the next day, after the discussion had been protracted twenty-two hours by Parnell's lieutenants, Gladstone secured precedence for the two bills, and on January 28 during the discussion on leave to introduce the Coercion Bill, he declared in a passionate speech that "with fatal and painful precision the steps of crime dogged the steps of the Land League."³⁰

To overcome the efforts of the Government, Parnell resorted to obstruction. He told his friends: "We must show these gentlemen that if they don't do what we want, they shall do nothing else. That is the only way this fight can be fought out."³¹ Parnell maintained the struggle at fever heat, seldom leaving the House. To an English member favorable to his cause, but opposed to obstruction he said, "The Government want war and they shall have it."³² In pursuance of his obstruction tactics, he managed to prolong the sitting for discussion of the measure from four o'clock Monday, January 31, till half past nine on Wednesday morning, and was only defeated then after the forty-one hours of debate by the arbitrary action of the Speaker who refused to hear further speeches.³³ The Irish leader and his friends then left the House and the bill was introduced. On the next day, he and some of his followers became so unruly in opposing Gladstone's resolutions reforming procedure in the House and in criticizing the Government that twenty-seven of them were suspended for the

30. Dictionary of National Biography, 43:328.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

day's sitting. The new rules allowed the measure to pass, and on March 2 it received the royal assent.³⁴ However, in its actual working the bill proved a failure, for, before a search could be made, liberty to do so had to be obtained from the authorities at Dublin Castle, and while communications were being made for that purpose the arms were put out of reach of the constabulary.³⁵ Early in June, 1881, the Government issued instructions to county inspectors looking towards the more efficient protection of those engaged in enforcing the Coercion Bill, and all officials engaged at sales or employed in executing writs, and other legal processes against which the Land League was fighting.³⁶

It will be remembered that the Government had refused to introduce the Land Bill before the Coercion Bill, but having carried the point, Gladstone brought in his Land Bill on April 7, 1881. This measure proposed to give to every tenant the right to sell his interest in the market, and also to establish a land court to fix fair rent. It virtually placed the occupier in the position of a fifteen year leaseholder. The second reading was moved April 25; from May 26 to July 22, the bill was in committee, but on July 29 it passed the House of Commons by a vote of 220 to 14, and was sent to the House of Lords, which, after considerable delay, passed it with slight changes on August 16, and the Commons accepting these, the measure soon became law.³⁷

34. Dictionary of National Biography, 43:328.

35. The London Times, May 5, 1881.

36. Ibid., June 7, 1881.

37. Ibid., August 27, 1881 (Editorial summary).

The Land Bill divided the Land League. Some branches accepted it joyfully,³⁸ but others strenuously opposed it as "utterly inadequate to meet the just demands of the tenant farmers of Ireland."³⁹ Parnell, who had demanded numerous amendments in the House of Commons, declared that nothing could be more disastrous to their interest than for the members of the Land League to rush in and take advantage of the Land Act, and he urged them to wait until the test cases which he had proposed at the Dublin Convention were decided.⁴⁰ These test cases were necessary in order to preserve Parnell's leadership which had been rendered critical by a partial acceptance of the Land Bill, for the revolutionary wing of the Land League strongly disliked the measure while the tenant farmers, as a whole, believed that it would help them. By proposing the test cases, Parnell satisfied both sides, for the former believed that the worthlessness of the Act would be speedily exposed, and the latter that the efficacy of court assistance would be rendered apparent.⁴¹

Besides trying the virtues of legislation, the Government frequently arrested the most violent leaders. Thus, on November 17, 1879, the Disraeli authorities arrested Davitt, Daly, and Killen, and on December 5, Brennan.⁴² The charge was sedition,

38. The London Times, August 24, 1881.

39. Ibid., August 16, 1881.

40. Ibid., September 27, 1881 and September 15, 1881.

41. Dictionary of National Biography, 43:328.

Mr. Slater expressed the opinion that the Act would have brought peace to Ireland and that Irish agriculture would have entered upon a new era of prosperity under the dual system of ownership if the economic circumstances - due to a fall of one third in food prices in sixteen years - had not proved unfavorable (The Making of Modern England, 231, 232).

42. The London Times, November 20, 1879 and December 6, 1879.

but the proof was not forthcoming, the men were released, and, in the words of Mrs. O'Shea, "Ireland laughed and the League grew."⁴³

Nearly a year later the Gladstone Government made a serious attempt to awe the country by this method. On November 2, 1880, criminal information was filed against the following fourteen important men: C. S. Parnell, John Dillon, J. G. Biggar, T. D. Sullivan, Thomas Sexton, Patrick Egan, Thomas Brennan, M. M. O'Sullivan, M. P. Boyton, P. J. Sheridan, Joseph Gordon, Matthew Harris, J. W. Walsh, and John W. Nally.⁴⁴ Parnell heard the news at Dublin on the fifth and expressed regret that Forster was degenerating from a statesman to a tool of the landlords,⁴⁵ and Biggar, when he received word, exclaimed: "Damned lawyers! sir, damned lawyers! Wasting the public money! Wasting the public money! Whigs damned rogues! Forster damned fool!"⁴⁶ Soon after the arrests, the Land League issued an address appealing to all Irish people at home and abroad and to all supporters of public liberty for a national fund to get the best legal talent for the defence, and money answered the call.⁴⁷ Parnell, in a way, seemed to regard the affair as a joke, for he knew that no jury in Ireland would convict them, and under date of December 28, 1880, he wrote to Mrs. O'Shea that the jury sworn that day could not possibly convict

43. Charles S. Parnell, His Love Story and Political Life, I, 121.

44. The London Times, November 3, 1880.

45. Mrs. O'Shea. Charles S. Parnell, His Love Story and Political Life, I, 144.

46. Ibid.

47. The London Times, November 6, 1880.

All the Executive meetings from this time to the release reported large subscriptions to the defence fund.

them and that there was a fair chance of acquittal.⁴⁸

On January 24, 1881, the nineteen counts in the indictment were reduced to five:

1. Combination to incite the tenants to pay no rents or at least not more than Griffith's valuation.
2. Combination to incite tenants dispossessed for non-payment of rent to reenter their holdings.
3. Combination to prevent persons taking or keeping farms from which tenants had been evicted for non-payment of rent.
4. Combination to prevent persons from buying goods taken in execution for rent.
5. Combination to excite the people to boycott those who paid rent or took farms from which others had been evicted for non-payment of rent.⁴⁹

During the trial Parnell and the others came and went at pleasure, and the frequent absence of the president of the Land League did not seem to excite public comment.⁵⁰ On January 25, 1881, after six and a half hours' deliberation the foreman of the jury reported, "We are unanimous that we cannot agree",⁵¹ and Parnell, who was in court at the time, was loudly cheered as he hurriedly left for England.⁵² When the news of the acquittal became known, brilliant illuminations, enthusiastic bands, and big torch light processions at Dungarven, Ballina, Cork and elsewhere testi-

48. Mrs. O'Shea, Charles S. Parnell, His Love Story and Political Life, I, 150-158.

49. The London Times, January 25, 1881.

50. Mrs. O'Shea, Charles S. Parnell, His Love Story and Political Life, I, 159.

51. Ibid. On the same day he had received the following notice which was typical of many: "Twelve of us will shoot you to-night, C. S. P. you rogue, if you are acquitted. If you escape we will shoot you. God save the Queen" (The London Times, January 26, 1881).

52. Mrs. O'Shea, Charles S. Parnell, His Love Story and Political Life, I, 160.

fied to the joy of the people.⁵³

Scarce a week had gone by before the Government tried the virtue of arrest again. This time Michael Davitt was the victim, and the indignation of the Home Rulers was largely responsible for their suspension. The Home Rulers in Parliament, however, were not alone in their anger, for numerous indignation meetings in various parts of Ireland testified to the popularity of Davitt and his cause.⁵⁴ On May 2, 1881, Dillon was arrested at Portarlington for inciting to violence,⁵⁵ and a little later a meeting called at New Pallas to consider the arrest resulted in a riot in which several persons were injured.⁵⁶ Not long after Dillon's arrest, the Reverend Sheehy and Secretary Brennan were arrested for inciting the people to violence, but the former was released,⁵⁷ and became ten fold more violent and popular than ever.

In addition to the attack on the prominent leaders, numerous organizers and officers in the local branches of the League were taken to prison. By March 12, 1881, under the Coercion Act, five arrests had been made in Galway, six in Mayo, three in Limerick, four in Leitrim, three in Kerry, two in Clare, and one each in Roscommon, Kildare, and Cork.⁵⁸ The number increased rapidly. On June 5, Sexton, in a meeting at Swords, said: "If the Government had made only a few arrests they might have cowed the

53. The London Times, January 27, 1881.

54. Ibid., February 4 to 8, 1881.

55. Ibid., May 3, 1881.

56. Ibid., May 13, 1881. Dillon was unexpectedly released, August 6, 1881 (The London Times, August 8, 1881).

57. The London Times, May 25, 1881.

58. Ibid., March 14, 1881.

"weak hearted, but now the arrests had become so common that when a man went into a gaol he found himself in such good company that he had to stop to consider whether he was inside or outside."⁵⁹ On August 18, Forster stated that two hundred and nine in all had been arrested,⁶⁰ but by October 6 the number in prison had been reduced to one hundred and thirty-eight.⁶¹

Since the Land League seemed to gain in power in spite of the numerous arrests that had been made, the Government deemed it necessary to strike once more at the highest officials, and early in October Forster wrote to Gladstone suggesting that Parnell be arrested under the Coercion Act. At Leeds, on October 7, Gladstone impeached Parnell and his policy and warned the Land League president that "the resources of civilization were not yet exhausted"; two days later, Parnell replied in the passionate Wexford speech in which he called Gladstone "a masquerading knight-errant", and "a pretended champion of the liberties of every other nation except those of the Irish nation."⁶² Moreover, he declared the prime minister inconsistent for approving Shaw, who had publicly declared his blood boiled every time he saw a process server, and in blaming him for not disapproving the so-called dynamite policy. The Wexford orator also compared Gladstone's words to the school boy's whistle when passing a church graveyard at night, but

59. The London Times, June 7, 1881.

60. Ibid., August 19, 1881. See Forster's quotations from the speeches.

61. The London Times, October 6, 1881.

62. Mrs. O'Shea. Charles S. Parnell, His Love Story and Political Life, I, 181.

insinuated that even to keep up his courage, Gladstone would not use such language with the Boers.⁶³ Possibly the climax of the whole speech was reached when Parnell, in speaking of Gladstone's admission that the Government had no moral force back of it in Ireland, said: "Mr. Gladstone in those few short words, admits the contention that Grattan and the volunteers of '82 fought for; he admits the contention that the men of '98 lost their lives for; he admits the contention that O'Connell argued for; he admits the contention that the men of '48 staked their all for; he admits the contention that the men of '65,⁶⁴ after a long period of depression and of apparent death of all national life, in Ireland, cheerfully faced the dungeon and the horrors of penal servitude for, and admits the contention that to-day you in your overpowering multitudes have reestablished, and please God will bring to a successful and final issue, namely, that England's mission in Ireland has been a failure, and that Irishmen have established their right to govern Ireland by laws made by themselves on Irish soil."⁶⁵

After he had made this speech, Parnell seems to have expected arrest. On October 11, he wrote to Mrs. O'Shea concerning his plans, but said that he could not be sure as something might turn up at the last minute.⁶⁶ On the next day, immediately after a cabinet meeting, Mrs. O'Shea wired in code to Parnell that Forster

63. Mrs. O'Shea. Charles S. Parnell, His Love Story and Political Life, I, 183 and 184.

64. This may refer to the raid of the Irish People and the arrests of 1865, or it may be a misprint and should read 1867.

65. Mrs. O'Shea. Charles S. Parnell, His Love Story and Political Life, I, 184.

66. Ibid., 189.

had left for Ireland with the warrant for his arrest.⁶⁷ On October 13, the president of the Land League was arrested,⁶⁸ and the same day he wrote to his "Own Queenie": "Politically it is a fortunate thing for me that I have been arrested, as the movement is breaking fast, and all will be quiet in a few months, when I shall be released."⁶⁹ Mrs. O'Shea describes the effect of the arrest thus: "At the news of the arrest a wave of indignation spread through Ireland. In Dublin there were riots. In many places shops were closed and towns and villages went into mourning as if for the death of a king."⁷⁰ This anger was due not to the arrest of Parnell alone, for Sexton, O'Kelly, Dillon, O'Brien, J. P. Quinn, and other prominent leaders had been arrested.⁷¹

Forster now followed up the imprisonment of the leaders by issuing a proclamation warning the Irish not to force people to give up lawful employment or abandon lawful occupations and pursuits or deter people from paying rents or fulfilling other engagements lawfully due or to compel people to abstain from doing what those people had a legal right to do or refrain from doing. Possibly, more important than the preceding provisions was the order not to become members of the Land League or subscribers thereto.⁷² Startled by the renewed activity of the Government and probably

67. Mrs. O'Shea. Charles S. Parnell, His Love Story and Political Life, I, 191.

68. The London Times, October 14, 1881.

69. Mrs. O'Shea. Charles S. Parnell, His Love Story and Political Life, I, 194.

70. Ibid., 196.

71. Ibid., 195.

72. The London Times, October 17, 1881.

desirous of obtaining their own freedom, the Land League leaders issued the famous No Rent Manifesto,⁷³ the last paragraph of which read: "Stand together in the face of the brutal and cowardly enemies of your race; pay no rents under any pretext; stand passively, firmly, fearlessly by while the armies of England may be engaged in their hopeless struggle against a spirit which their weapons cannot touch; act for yourselves if you are deprived of the counsels of those who have shown you how to act; no power of legalized violence can extort one penny from your purses against your will; if you are evicted, you will not suffer; the landlord who evicts you will be a ruined pauper, and the Government which supports him with its bayonets will learn in a single winter how powerless is armed force against the will of a united, determined and self-reliant nation."⁷⁴ Forster's opportunity had now come, and three days later, on October 20, he replied by proclaiming the Land League an "unlawful and criminal association." He forbade all meetings and warned the members to sever their relations with the association.⁷⁵ Making virtue out of necessity, the Land League answered by calling on the people to remain firm and unbroken in their passive resistance, but to abandon for the present all pro-

73. The London Times, October 17, 1881.

The manifesto was probably issued in response to Ford's suggestion to Egan, the Land League treasurer, who had previously established himself at Paris, to pay no more rent until the leaders were released (Dictionary of National Biography, 43:329). Although Parnell was really opposed to the measure and Dillon openly so, most of the leaders then in Kilmashnam Gaol approved of it; hence it was signed and published in United Ireland on October 17 (Mrs. O'Shea, Charles S. Parnell, His Love Story and Political Life, I, 196).

74. McWade, R. M. The Uncrowned King, 183 (McWade quotes the entire address, Pages 177-183).

75. The London Times, October 21, 1881.

jected public meetings in connection with the League.⁷⁶

Although the Land League branches, for the most part, quietly submitted to the inevitable,⁷⁷ the work was partially carried on by the Ladies' Land League, which had been founded in February, 1881, by Davitt, and which had Miss Anne Parnell,⁷⁸ the sister of our Wexford orator, as president. With the release of the Irish leaders in May, 1882,⁷⁹ the land movement received more aid, and on October 17, 1883, at a national conference in Dublin the Land League was avowedly revived as the Irish National League with the objects of national self-government, land law reform, local self-government, extension of Parliamentary and municipal franchises, and the development and encouragement of the labor and industrial interests of Ireland, but the new organization did not inherit the power of the old.⁸⁰

From the foregoing pages the following conclusions may be drawn:

1. The remote causes of the Irish National Land League may be traced to centuries of oppression, but more especially to the sufferings of 1846-1850, and the dangers of 1879.
2. The Land League established subordinate branches throughout Ireland, but these branches were especially numerous in southern and western Ireland where dangers were greatest, famine most widespread, evictions most common, and crime most rampant.

76. The London Times, October 22, 1881.

77. Ibid., October 27, 1881.

78. Miss Parnell was the writer of several poems of an incendiary nature, but possibly her attitude is best revealed by the following anecdote. When she was talking to an English tourist about a fearless and almost ruthless agent, he asked, "You surely don't think they would dare shoot him?", and she replied, "I'm afraid not. In these parts anger often evaporates in threats" (McWade, R. M. The Uncrowned King, 77).

79. Dictionary of National Biography, 43:330.

80. Ibid., 331.

3. The early objects of the League were low rents, the stopping of evictions, and the attainment of favorable legislation; the advanced objects were the expulsion of the landlords, the establishment of a peasant proprietary, and the securing of independence.
4. The Land League made use of monster mass meetings, conventions, and the press to spread its teachings.
5. The principal methods used by the League were holding the rent, retaining the harvest, frustrating sheriffs' sales, reinstating the ejected, and applying the powerful boycott.
6. Although the Land League was charged with stealing arms, interfering with the mail, wrecking trains, destroying crops, killing and mutilating animals, burning property, making personal attacks, and committing murder and practically every crime in the calendar, neither it nor its responsible leaders stood for or encouraged crime, and violence, in all probability, would have been greater if there had been no Land League.
7. The clergy, especially those nearest the people, sympathized with the Land League, but most of them condemned the teaching and acts of the extreme Land Leaguers.
8. Since the League was blamed for the conditions in Ireland, the opposition to it increased as Irish troubles grew worse.
9. The opposition of the Government as shown by legislation, the proclamation of meetings and the arrests proved ineffectual until the Land League issued the ill advised No Rent Manifesto which gave the Government legitimate reason for its suppression.

Finally, the work of the Land League may, in part, be summarized thus: it helped to stop famine and pestilence, it lessened evictions, and it decreased crime. Moreover, as O'Connor said with truth though with bitterness: "Beyond this, the Land League has rendered inevitable a radical settlement of the land question; has transformed a whole race of hereditary, despairing, and impotent slaves into hopeful, self-reliant, and almost omnipotent freemen; and has shaken to its base a foul, plundering and murderous tyranny of centuries' duration. This - one of the most

"marvelous and gigantic revolutions of any time - Mr. Parnell and the Land League have accomplished through a practically peaceful revolution, by constitutional agitation, and in the space of eighteen months."⁸¹

81. Contemporary Review, 38:999.

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